WORLD / A19

Nagasaki mayor gunned down; member of Japan's crime syndicate arrested

NEWS / A2

Inter-Parliamentary Union team here to probe rights violations

BUSINESS / B1

Neda OKs P47.9-B Laiban dam project for long-term water supply for Metro

NEWS / A2

Mike Arroyo now walking; may be discharged in 2 days, say doctors

Most countries don't trust US but RP does

MOST COUNTRIES DO NOT TRUST THE UNITED States to act responsibly on the global stage, but the Philippines does, making it the staunchest US supporter, according to a multinational poll on foreign credibility.

Eighty-five percent of respondents in the Philippines said they trusted the United States either a "great deal" or "somewhat."

That level of trust is higher than the 61 percent

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, April 19, 2007 ... Vol. 22 ... No. 130 ... P10

Ex-Lacson aide faces 10-year jail term in US

NEWARK, New Jersey—Federal prosecutors are seeking a 10-year prison term for a former Philippine National Police officer who pleaded guilty to possessing a fake US driver's permit as part of an operation of a ring under the Arroyo administration.

In seeking the maximum term for Michael Ray Aquino, prosecutors said that the "serious deception" that he had caused to the American

Extreme heat triggers surge in power demand, brownouts

By Abigail L. Ho and TJ Burgonio

A SURGE IN DEMAND FOR ELECTricity because of the extreme heat caused a power shortage that aggravated the high

Campbell's body found

Police suspect American was murdered

WOMEN OF PEACE AND LOVE Julia Campbell, pass closer, gifts, hugs, her sister and her fellow young victims of "Super typhoon Reming" at an evacuation center in Legazpi City last December.

By Melvin Gascon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BANAUE, IFUGAO—Local volunteers reconvening yesterday morning found a body believed to be that of Julia Campbell, the US Peace Corps volunteer who has been missing for 10 days, at a dry creek amid the scenic rice terraces of Barangay Batad here.

The body, which police said was already decomposing, was unearthed in a shallow grave by Raul Binalla, 28, a local tour guide. Binalla was among 40 volunteers who had been tasked to scour Batad's mountainsides.

Supt. Raul Gonzales, regional police chief, said the body was then exhumed and clad in clothes similar to those Chri Campbell was last seen wearing.

A pair of reading glasses was found near a mud about 50 meters from the body, with one of the lenses lying nearby. Police also recovered a mobile phone believed belonged to the woman.

Police said there was strong indication that Campbell, 40, was murdered, based on initial findings of local police investigators.

"The way that the victim was placed lying on th back between

CAMPBELL'S A4

Julia brought cheer where there was gloom

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—IT WAS HOT and dusty as the evacuation center for four cities of children's dough- ies filled the air as US Peace Corps volunteer Julia Campbell played jacks for games.

Inside the makeshift school for the homeless, her fair gauntly struggled to keep cheer to evacuees following "Supertyphoon Reming" (Durian) in the Bicol Hinterlands.

The disoriented sisters, hugged children and made them forget the terrible tragedy on Nov. 30, 2006, that left more than 600 people dead or missing and hundreds of thousands homeless.

The 40-year-old Julia, who had been reported missing while refusing to flee to higher ground on Easter Sunday, had been

CAMPBELL'S TRAIL How Banaue's scenic rice terraces in Batad

JULIA A2

Nueva Ecija radio reporter shot dead

By Aurelio Rupot and Tonnee Ocejo
Inquirer Central Luzon

CABANATUAN CITY—A FIELD reporter of the government-run Radyo ng Bayan was found dead early yesterday in Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija.

The body of Mark Palacay, 41, was found on a road in Barangay Mapalad at about 6 a.m. It had fractures in the skull and face, and bullet wounds in the back and lower lip, according to an eyewitness report.

Palacay's death brought to 51 the number of journalists (most of them radio broadcasters working in the provinces) killed since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001.

In Manila, Philippine National Police Director Oscar Reyes said Palacay's death was work-related.

Reyes, chief of Task Force Usig, said Palacay was an "activist" advocate and was working on a series of exposés on graft cases before he was found dead.

From reports, Palacay and a companion left his house in Gumaba town on Tuesday afternoon and went to the provincial police office in Cabanatuan.

The two left the police headquarters on a tricycle for an unknown destination late in the afternoon.

Palacay's companion has since gone missing.

Police have begun searching the Palacay's car and a note said to

NUEVA A11

THE GUNMAN

Cho Seung-Hui

Portrait of a mass killer: Who is Cho?

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA—The 23-year-old South Korean immigrant who committed the deadliest school shooting in US history was a shrouded, isolated man whose gory rampage heralded his classmates said yesterday.

Cho Seung-hui seemed to the United States when he was 8 and was in his final year of studying English at Virginia Tech when on Monday he gunned down 20 students and three professors before fatally shooting himself.

Authorities found few people on campus who knew Cho well, since he was a loner who rarely spoke in class and whose writings opened a window only on unsettled and violent mind.

"When I first heard about the multiple shootings ... his first thought was about my friends, and my second thought was Cho! It was Seung

FOR FULL AS

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL Faculty members, staff and their families come together to remember, to share their grief and the memories.

SARS FUNDS

₱50M used to buy cell phones, TVs

By Tony S. Bergonia

HOW LAST IS IT TO TURON AMID P50 MILLION in government funds?

Very easy, according to documents furnished the Institute and results of a House of Representatives' investigation of a program to fight Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003.

First, use the money to buy items like cellular phones, cars, laptops, flat screen TVs, automatic bikes, strollers, digital cameras, microphones and desktop computers, and pay for vehicle registration for the country's 42,000 barangays.

Second, make the purchases after the country

GOOD FOR A FEW LAUGHS. A brief encounter during a press conference at Malacañang Palace between Philippine and the comedienne Rep. Darlene Custodio would seem to make character in be the butt of bubbles instead of public ridicule. Pacquiao returned to his native General Santos City on Wednesday to a grand welcome led by Custodio.

Court asked to order AFP: Free militants

By Nestor F. Burgos Jr. and Jolens R. Balanzion
Inquirer Visayas

KORLO CITY—THE HEAD OF ONE OF TWO detained militant leaders in Panay yesterday asked the Iloilo Regional Trial Court to order officials of the armed Forces to produce them and release them to their families.

In Cebu City, two militant party-list groups also held a demonstration to protest the abduction of two of their members, purportedly by the military.

In a petition for habeas corpus, Luis Oliva

COURT A 11

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WEATHER FORECAST

SUNDAY: Below zero all summer long, sharp dips all day, an occasional chill in the air, gulf offshores will face steady attack, they will call small craft warnings all day long. No rain in the country, still to get dark at 6:30 in the evening. Full moon on the 7th. Total eclipse.

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Metro Cebu	Cloudy with rain
Baguio	Partly cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with rain
Dagupan	Partly cloudy	Iloilo	Cloudy with rain
Laoag	Cloudy with rain	Tacloban	Cloudy with rain
Puerto Prin.	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with rain
Legaspi	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with rain
Catarman	Partly cloudy	Butuan	Cloudy with rain

IPU seeks Beltran release

FACT FINDING team from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (from left) Sharon Carstairs of Canada, Anders Johnsson and Ingeborg Solmaes.

A FACT-FINDING TEAM FROM THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY Union arrived yesterday to investigate the case of six leftist lawmakers accused of rebellion.

The Geneva-based IPU will meet with top defense, police and justice officials as well as the six party-list representatives, the so-called Batasan 6, over three days to see if the cases are meant to intimidate and silence the opposition.

The six include Crispin Beltran, who is detained, and five others—Satur Ocampo, Teddy Casiño, Joel Virador, Liza Maza and Rafael Mariano—who are under the custody of the House of Representatives.

All are accused of plotting a 2006 coup against President Macapagal-Arroyo, alongside military rebels and opposition politicians.

Sen. Sharon Carstairs of Canada, the head of the team, said they would also look into new charges against Ocampo that he was involved in mass killings in the 1980s when he was a communist guerrilla leader.

All sides

"We want to hear from all sides of any arguments," Carstairs said, adding that they wanted to see if "the accusations ... are founded in law" and are on political motives.

Carstairs said the IPU was also seeking the release of Beltran from detention in the Philippine Heart Center, saying he posed no risk as he was 54 years old and had a heart ailment.

The findings of the team would be released later this month at the annual IPU meeting in Bali, Indonesia, Carstairs added.

She said the group's findings had no legal authority but would hopefully have some moral authority.

The rash of killings of activists, journalists and politicians in the Philippines under the Arroyo administration has gained international attention.

United Nations special rapporteur Philip Alston earlier this year accused the military of being behind most of the killings and said it was "in almost total denial" over the deaths.

The military has denied involvement and said that communist insurgents may be behind many of the deaths as part of an internal purge.

Drilon hands off

The IPU, which includes legislators from 143 countries, is an organization of parliaments and legislatures of sovereign countries.

Sen. Franklin Drilon, who is the president of the IPU council, is not human rights, has inhibited himself from the investigation. Carstairs is the vice president of the committee.

The other members of the mission are Sweden-Johnsson of Sweden, the IPU secretary general, and Ingeborg Solmaes, the committee secretary.

Carstairs said their mandate is limited to investigating, observing and making recommendations.

The IPU has no legal authority to enforce its recommendations on sovereign states, she said.

"There's no legal authority, but we have considerable amount of moral authority and we present our findings before the IPU. Our report will be voted on and our recommendations will surely be taken seriously," she said.

The team met yesterday with Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Speaker Jose de Venecia and Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz and then ended Bellosillo. AP/and Inona Pazzibugan

Troops press hunt for Moro leader

By Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac

ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., yesterday ordered government troops in Jolo Island to get Moro rebel leader Habier Malik "as soon as possible," preferably before the May 14 polls.

Three Marine battalions and Army special force units under Gen. Rodel Rafael's Task Force Comet have intensified the pursuit of Malik, described as the leader of a "rogue" faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) that shelled a marine camp last Friday, five soldiers and a child were reported killed in the attack. Malik is a peace negotiator.

The task force, headed by American advisers, an also pursuing suspected Indonesian terrorists Dulmatin and Umar Patek, believed to be hiding out with extremist Abu Sayyaf rebels in the same area as Malik.

Provincial Macapagal-Arroyo backed the military offensive against Malik, barely a day after the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) called for a stop to six days of fighting in the southwestern island province that has left 21 people dead and thousands of residents fleeing their homes.

Executive secretary Eduardo Ermita, during his regular media briefing in Malacañang, was quick to deny that this indicated "all-out war" against the MNLF, with which the government signed a peace accord in 1996.

"This is hardly an all-out war because as much as possible we want to contain the problem in one area against one commander only," Ermita said.

He added that the pursuit operations centered such a wide area because the troops were also after the Indonesians linked to the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiya.

AFP information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said Malik and his men were on the run after the military overran their Camp Bilangan in Patikul.

Bacarro acknowledged that there would be "security implications" should pursuit operations against Malik continue until May 14, midterm election day. It would disturb voters.

"That's why we want to fast track the capture of Malik," he said.

Bacarro reiterated that the government did not relent to truce with the MNLF when it secured a rebel area under Moro commander Khaid Addilon in barangay Maraug, Indanan town on April 11.

Bacarro claimed the AFP confiscated with eight MNLF commanders, including Addilon, and got their consent for troops from the Army's 35th Infantry Battalion to enter the MNLF area in barangay Maraug so they could pursue the Indonesian terrorists.

Malik's remote attack on the Marine camp was reportedly in retaliation for the military offensive in Addilon's camp.

Meanwhile, Bacarro said that the AFP was still verifying the 15 civilians reportedly illegally being sought by the Sayyaf rebels in exchange for the release of seven persons they abducted the other day in Jolo.

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Mike A to leave hospital in 2 days

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

JOSE MIGUEL ARROYO, PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, has been given the go-signal to leave the hospital as early as Saturday following his transfer from the intensive care unit yesterday.

Dr. Bernard Carillo, Arroyo's heart surgeon, said that "from a surgical point of view," Arroyo can be discharged in two days' time.

But he said he has advised Arroyo to stay for five more days to complete a cardiac rehabilitation program, which involves rehabilitation of his movement and monitoring of his blood pressure, heart rate and other vital signs.

"They want to commence his exercise regarding," Carillo said.

Carillo, who performed the nine-hour open-heart surgery on April 9, said Arroyo was able to walk around his hospital room yesterday and has been moved on a soft diet and exercising without the aid of feeding tubes.

"The cardiac enzymes complete, we are about to send the First Gentleman home and hopefully we will not have any more problems," Dr. Julio Gapuz Cervantes, Arroyo's main attending physician, told a press briefing.

She said the Presidente told the doctors they can discharge Arroyo on Saturday without waiting for her to return from a trip to China that afternoon.

In a speech at the the Social Security System, the President said her husband was cursing a lower but that was part of the effects of his operation.

Fast recovery

Arroyo himself issued a statement thanking his friends and supporters for their prayers and promised that he would resume his charity work as soon as possible.

"His recovery is fast for such a very high-risk operation," Carillo said, adding that even patients who underwent such simple procedures as appendectomies needed to stay in the hospital for 5 to 10 days.

But just eight days after his emergency surgery and triple bypass surgery, Arroyo was up and about.

"He is now walking around. He walks a few meters, then rests and walks again," Carillo said after checking on his VIP patient early yesterday.

He noted that all other vital organs, which had been under close watch for possible malfunctions after the 10-hour operation, were functioning normally.

Cervantes said Arroyo was now on "progressive heart-healthy diet," but confined to stay away from oily, fatty and high-sodium food.

"He has a good appetite. He consumed his lunch today," she said.

In her medical bulletin, Cervantes said Arroyo's kidneys were fully functional and that he was no longer on antibiotics.

"He is now on easy rehabilitation, on the way to optimum health," she said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said it might be better to wait for the President's return before discharging Arroyo from hospital.

Go to China

Mrs Arroyo decided to push through with her official visit to China but cut the trip to 72 hours from the planned five days because of her husband's condition. She is scheduled to leave on Friday afternoon and is expected to be back on Saturday.

The President will address the Boao Forum in China's Hainan province.

Arroyo's office released a statement yesterday in which he told friends and supporters: "Your prayers saved my life."

"I hope to compensate your prayers with an intensified effort to help the poor, especially the sick, in my own little way in the limited possible time," he said.

He said he was overwhelmed by the flowers that were sent to his hospital room. He suggested that flowers intended for him be donated to the ICU foundation at the Philippine General Hospital instead.

The statement said the PGH Foundation received financial and medical assistance to indigents seeking treatment at the state-run PGH.

It said that from January to April alone, at least 210 sick indigents, most of them from Metro Manila, benefited from P1.3 million worth of assistance from the PGH Foundation.

Team Unity: Mindanao will deliver victory to us

By Dil Cabacungan Jr.

COTABATO CITY—JUST LIKE IN 2004, THE vote in Mindanao will seal the deal for Team Unity bets that are hoping to overcome the popularity of their formidable opposition rivals with the administration's vaunted stockpiled of the local government units on this island region.

Team Unity candidate Pangoro Pichay said victory would square itself in Mindanao which possibly bolster president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo with her slim winning margin in the 2004 presidential elections.

"For administration stalwart (the vote) over over the local officials subverted their certificates of candidacy. Nowhere in the Philippines is the command vote more potent than in Mindanao. With 12 million votes, the region could be the deciding factor in these elections," said Pichay in an interview.

Pichay, however, did not address the lingering issue that Mindanao was ground zero for the alleged cheating of the elections as exposed in the "Hello Garci" scandal.

Team Unity senatorial candidate Teofisto Guingona said that administration Team Unity's advantage in Mindanao was crucial to an administration victory in the polls considering that the group was the overwhelming favorite in the region.

For Drieza, who was running as an administration candidate for the first time, it was only now that she personally realized the power of command vote specially in Mindanao as the recalled how governors and mayors routinely asked their allies in the barangays to deliver the votes for 11 on May 14.

"I believe that this is where concentration is more important than popularity. We know how popular (losing presidential bet) Fernando Poe Jr. (whose ride for the) in 2004 was but he lost heavily in this region," said Drieza.

Team Unity's senatorial candidate Teofisto Guingona reiterated that Mindanao would provide the foundation for the administration victory in the polls. "I have always won in Mindanao and I expect to do well here again. I don't think there will be a change in sentiment in Mindanao from the past elections so I expect the region to have the same impact as in 2004," said Bello.

Team Unity is currently in Mindanao for a two-day campaign covering five provinces and the two cities in the Bangsamoro (South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat Barangays General Santos City) to be hosted by the region's political mogols.—General Santos (Guardian) City Mayor Pedro "Jun" Rivera, Sarangani Gov. Miguel Dominguez, Executive City Mayor Fernando Miguel, Sultan Kudarat Gov. Pax Mangudadatu, Maguindanao Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan and Vice Gov. Esmael Mangudadatu, Cotabato City Mayor Japal Guiani.

A highlight of the Mindanao outing is a motorcade in Cotabato City where Team Unity is expected to draw the limelight with newly crowned NBC super-featherweight champion Manny Pacquiao who is seeking a congressional seat.

PICHAY: "Elections are over"

GOMEZ: PT millionaire member case

Gonzalez wants Gomez DQ'd for tax evasion

By Lala B. Salaverria

CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE who have tax liabilities like senatorial candidate Richard Gomez, should be disqualified from running, according to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Citing Gomez who is facing a P7 million tax evasion case, Gonzalez reminded voters the Commission on Elections, during the poll body consider taking into consideration candidates' tax payment history when determining whether they should be allowed to run for office.

Those found to be remiss in their duty to pay taxes should be disqualified from running, Gonzalez said in his letter to Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos.

He said people running for public office should have a high sense of morality.

"The payment of the taxes due and the filing of correspondingITR are signs of good citizenship and acts of good faith and sincerity especially since the candidate is seeking an office in government," said Gonzalez.

If candidates are required to undergo drug tests, they should also be required to settle all tax liabilities, he said.

Through the Omnibus Election Code and the constitutionally portable the qualifications of candidates with tax liabilities, Gonzalez said it might be time to consider this as a criterion.

"People who are seeking high office and who are tax evaders, what will they do when they are holding high office already?" he said.

"Paying our taxes promptly reveals an important trait of our character. It urges (the Comelec to review and ponder upon this aspect," he said.

Gonzalez's tax case for illegally failing to file his income tax returns remains unsettled despite repeated demands from the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Gonzalez said the same was working a "high and executive" government post.

"Still it may be proper to disqualify (it). Correct for repeatedly refusing to settle his tax assessments with the government he is seeking to serve?" he said.

He said Gomez's lackadaisical payment overtures to settle the case, had even caught the help of House Speaker Jose de Venecia, but the actor has not yet followed through on the offer.

More party-list 'fixing' bared

By Christian V. Esguerra

ANOTHER ALIPIT-ing congressional institution has come out to denounce an ongoing party-list racket in the upcoming elections.

Popular anti-aging doctor Ami Mendiola yesterday said he had been approached by "friends" who wanted him to run as a congressional nominee in an unrelated party-list organization—for a fee.

Mendiola, who is a nominee of a group that has been denied accreditation by the Commission of Elections, claimed he was approached by a group offering to make him the nominee of any of two party-list organizations which are already accredited by the Comelec.

The first organization being offered supposedly represented overseas Filipino workers and the second one, an unregistered group, allowed by him each other had been made the sought a go-between who had connected him via mobile phone.

The offer was P5 million to be the second nominee and P2.5 million to occupy the third slot, he told the business in an interview.

He said the offer came to his second week of March when the Comelec had yet to announce the group, the barangay development and Transparency (Bantay), led by Raul Lambino.

"There were two parties being offered to me," he said, adding that he turned them down in favor of Bantay.

Mendiola said an honest-to-good-news application for party-list accreditation would cost a group only around P1,000 covering all the paperwork.

Namfrel running late in quick-count work

By Kristine L. Alave

THE NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT for Free Elections (Namfrel) said it was running a little behind in its quick-count due to the absence of election officials supervised counts across the election watchdog body would be ready before May 14.

"We are still in the process of receiving some chapters. So far, more than 70 percent of votes have been received... We are a little bit delayed," Director Raphael Alunday chairman, said a Club Filipino media forum yesterday.

He said the group, accredited by the Commission on Elections to conduct the quick count using the task officials' copy of the election returns, still has some "organizational" problems to solve, particularly in remote areas like the mountain provinces and Mindanao.

And less than a month before the polls open, Namfrel's website, www.namfrel.org, has yet to go off the ground. "This website will be back soon," said a message on the page.

But on the whole, the preparations for Namfrel's quick count were going smoothly, said Maglucd.

He said Namfrel would soon setting up its second headquarters at the De La Salle University mid-week.

The organization is also aiming to have the municipal results transmitted to the national headquarters by e-mail, Maglucd said.

The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. will provide the needed lines, net infrastructure and communications, while business groups had the hardware and equipment for the tabulation.

Namfrel attempted to have the results transmitted text message in the 2004 elections but because of the large volume of data, the system was overwhelmed, Maglucd said. It will not be relying on cell coverage this time.

The electronic transmission of results should reduce the chances of tampering, said Maglucd.

He said security cordons have already been set up to secure the votes for 11 on May 14.

Namfrel has also deployed 30,000 volunteers for the May local elections and is close to getting that figure.

Maglucd said Namfrel's manpower will be augmented by volunteers from various civic society groups like church-based organizations, the Makati Business Club, alumni de Manila University and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

Maglucd noted that Namfrel also has joined forces with Bar Watch Partners' Council for Responsible Voting (BWPCRV).

BWPCRV volunteers will monitor the elections in places where Namfrel has few volunteers, Maglucd said.

More votes are to be conducted in the next few weeks.

"We are doing this to preserve the integrity of the results. The more we have observers in there is the greater chances of fraud," Maglucd explained. It is also better for Namfrel.

Namfrel is also consolidating its volunteer network as it can observe and monitor the counting of ballots even from the grassroots level.

It will need 300,000 volunteers for the May local elections and is close to getting that figure.

Maglucd said Namfrel's manpower will be augmented by volunteers from various civic society groups like church-based organizations, the Makati Business Club, alumni de Manila University and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

Maglucd noted that Namfrel also has joined forces with Bar Watch Partners' Council for Responsible Voting (BWPCRV).

BWPCRV volunteers will monitor the elections in places where Namfrel has few volunteers, Maglucd said.

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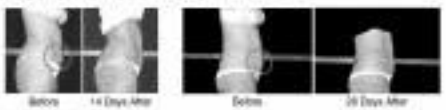

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We win, you win, Palace tells local execs

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BALDADO, Elmer M.
BALLERAS, Jennifer B.
BELLEZA, Dominique F.
BIBILA, Lucio A.
CABREZ, Elmer H.
CALADES, Jr., Jesse F.
CALUYO, Emmanuel G.
CANE, Antimedes C.
CARDINELL, Jose Abel T.
CO, Ronald T.
CRAVES-ESPAÑA, Georgilina A.
CUETO, Crescencio M.
DAZA, Lauderner J.
DIONISIO, JR., Mario T.
DOMINIC, Nadia B.
EDNACO, Marissa L.
FALLARME, III, Antonio M.
GONZALES, Geronimo C.
GONZALO, John R.
GUITERING, Bonifacio M.
HERMOSO, Cynthia O.
LAYUG, Lenny L.
LIRIO, Maria Victoria A.
LOGRONIO, Victoria V.
LOPEZ, JR., Rodolfo T.
MANAZON, Ronald D.
MACAPILI, Rochelle T.
MARQUEL, Melchor L.
MILLAR, Patricia V.
MOSELLE, JR., Wenice C.
NOLA, Alexander G.
NIETO, Myrtle B.
ONA, JR., Eddie O.
PARENAS, Rikirie T.
PERREZ, Margie C.
PEREZ, Marc Terry C.
PLAZO, Generoso Steven R.
REGINALDO, Eric C.
REYES, JR., Rizal G.
SARMIGA-MANUEL, Ma. Cristina M.
SAN JUAN, Yancy S.R.
SANTIAGO, Jocelyn M.
SERRANO, JR., Lucdegario H.
SEVILLA, Enrico P.
SUMILANG-PAZ-LLANA, Ma. Cristina S.
TADENA, Angelyn A.
TERCERO, Cheryl I.
TOLENTINO, Jo-Anne C.
UBANKO-AMINGO, Edna F.
VALDEZ, Ferdinand A.
VERNEZ, Celestino C.
VILLAR, Raulito B.
VILLASIS, Christian G.

A Testimonial Dinner will be tendered by the MLQU administration and Faculty of the School of Law, in honor of the successful examinees on April 21, 2007 (Wed.) at 7:00 p.m., Jade Vine Restaurant, U.N. Avenue Manila.

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

IN THE 2007 OTHER ELECTIONS, MONEY talks. Or so Malacañang hopes.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday said Malacañang has reminded local executives to support the Team Unity poll local administration candidates because they would enjoy more benefits from the administration.

Ermita spoke candidly about the financial rewards, given in the form of projects for their respective constituents, that awaits local officials as he dismissed surveys showing Team Unity candidates facing poorly compared with their rivals in the Genuine Opposition.

The message, Ermita said, is this: "Look guys, we are in the administration and I'm sure you'll enjoy more benefits should you show cooperation for our candidates because we are in the administration and you will get more (benefits) definitely."

"That's the essence of being with the majority or administration party as against being with the] minority. That's the essence of party politics," Ermita said in his weekly press briefing.

That's the way it is in politics, Ermita explained.

Ermita said a good example of the assistance extended to the local officials is the President's order for the release of P606 million for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of hospitals in the Bicol provinces affected by the three recent typhoons.

Exercising leadership

Ermita said President Macapagal-Arroyo herself reiterated the appeal for support to Team Unity candidates when she met with the heads of the League of Provinces, League of Cities and League of Municipalities in Malacañang yesterday.

"She reminded them that it is important to support the (Team Unity) candidates," Ermita said.

He said the President was just exercising her leadership as President and leader of the political coalition.

"It's her way of reminding them that as leader of this country and leader of the political majority party, [she would like to let] them know that she will do everything in her able to help and reach out to those for [being members]who, as that development funds of the government can [reach them]," Ermita said.

Asked why the President needed to rally the local executives if the administration is confident of electoral victory, Ermita said, "the President (she would like to) remind that sooner [in this election] is performance and therefore she would like to remain in the local executives not to forget that she has done a lot for their constituents."

Ermita said the Team Unity candidates are issued on the Arroyo administration's "politics of performance."

"If the local executives are able to sell their constituents that the people are benefiting from the government that they will look favorably on administration candidates," Ermita said.

Ermita dismissed the surveys, saying the administration has solid figures showing that 95 percent of all local officials are affiliated with the administration and can deliver votes for its candidates.

Despite the survey, Ermita said they have reason to believe that the administration will be able to install 76 out of 81 governors, 189 out of 217 congressmen and 29 out of 30 city mayors.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 19, 2007
2nd Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 5:27-33
Gospel: John 3:31-36

He who comes from above is above all; he who comes from the earth belongs to the earth and his words, too, are earthly. The One who comes from heaven speaks of the things he has seen and heard, for Jesus returns to this fact as our supreme witness. Whoever does receive his testimony acknowledges the truthfulness of God.

The one sent by God speaks God's words and gives the Spirit without measure. For the Father loves the Son and has entrusted everything into his hands. Whoever believes in the Son lives with eternal life, but whoever refuses to believe in the Son will never know life and will have the justice of God.

Commentary

The pattern of what is happening to the apostles follows the one that Jesus himself experienced. When questioned about who they claim to be and preached "their name," they responded that they also had total loyalty to the truth of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. And the Holy Spirit lived in them as well.

The leaders are trying to play cool and react to it all calmly. The Word brings resolution, opposing us to the truth fight. The Spirit leaves testimony to believers in the power of God in the world.

The Father loves the Son and has given everything over to him, and the Son has given everything over to us in his life of the risen one. He does and speaks for words some of the Jesus deeds and ways to the world.

(Servants Publications Inc., 4 Main Ave. cor. Q. Ave., Cubao, Quezon City, P.O. Box 4, Manila, 1103 Philippines, Tel. 911-5181 to 83, Fax 911-5182, E-mail: servants@pacific.net.ph, Website: http://www.servantspublications.org/Christian Resources in the Philippines)

Ang Kapatiran: Light a candle for clean polls

A CANDLELIGHT PRAYER rally will be led by an interfaith group in prep for an honest, peaceful and credible elections amidst the history of Ang Kapatiran party's three unsuccessful candidacies.

The prayer rally for senatorial candidates Zenaida Paredes, Blanca D. Ramirez and Adrian O. Sison and the party's local candidates in the May 14 elections will start with the lighting of candles by believers in front of their homes daily from 8 to 9 p.m. from April 20 to April 30.

The candlelight rally will culminate at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City on May 1 for a program of prayers and songs from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. At a given signal, all candles shall be lit. There will be no speeches, no clenched fists, no shouting, no violent language and no public disturbance.

"It's time for all believers to make a difference. It's time to stand up and be counted," says Dr. Hollis F. Maggay, president of Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture (ISACC).

"For those who would like to continue with money politics, guns and goons, family political dynasty, dishonesty, deception, hypocrisy, immoral compromises, political patronage, pay-off, and electoral fraudulent, you may for them to have a change of 'hearts,'" said Nandy Bacalso, founder and executive general of Ang Kapatiran national political party.

Bacalso, in a press statement, appealed to "God-fearing faithful who want to put God at the center of politics, who want to put moral sense and decency in politics, and who want to work for the common good, to join in this interfaith prayer rally to implore the almighty to strengthen the 'haves of good' and frustrate the plans of those who would seek to thwart the will of the people."

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Conference on political trends held tomorrow

THE DIRECTION and trend of Philippine political development under a [illegible] government will be discussed by the Philippine Political Science Society in a conference on April 20 at Dusit Hotel Nikko.

Leading the panelists will be Philippine president Manuel Lauzon who will discuss the Constitution and its role in national development.

Dean Jose Abueva, former UP president and now Kalayaan College president, will discuss the political trend based on the development of the Philippines, and the media panelists from the Inquirer will present its views on the issue.

Cosmic Chat Benjamin Abalos has been invited to present his agency's role in [illegible].

Manila Sun, former managing editor of BusinessWorld, will discuss media's role.

Investment banker and political analyst Antonio Contreras who has an extensive database on Philippine elections since the late 60s, will discuss the Philippine presidency and its role in political governance.

Reactors to the presentations are Sr. Fr. Santos, Dr. Mina Ramirez, Dr. Nestor Mata, Leonardo Medez, Dr. Ernesto Gonzales, Inquirer Nimfa, Angel Santos, retired gen. Jose T. Almonte, Amando C. Doronila and Dr. Alex Magno.

Erap at 70: Pardons only for the guilty

By Rob Cabreros

MIDNITE MASS IS THE AGE AT WHICH a convicted criminal becomes eligible for executive clemency.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada, who turns 70 today, would qualify should he be convicted of plunder charges.

"Pardons are only for the guilty," said Estrada, who celebrates his birthday today at his San Juan hometown. It will be his third birthday in detention since being arrested on corruption and bribery charges in 2001.

The Sandiganbayan antigraft court yesterday granted Estrada's petition to be allowed to leave his villa detention quarters and spend the day with his family, particularly with his 102-year-old mother, at his Wack Wack residence.

By 10:00 p.m., Estrada must be back in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal province, where he has been detained since being arrested on corruption and bribery charges in 2001.

The Sandiganbayan antigraft court yesterday granted Estrada's petition to be allowed to leave his villa detention quarters and spend the day with his family, particularly with his 102-year-old mother, at his Wack Wack residence.

By 10:00 p.m., Estrada must be back in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal province, where he has been detained since being arrested on corruption and bribery charges in 2001.

The court has also allowed him to first undergo a checkup at his respective door and back gates at the Camp at San Juan, Metro Manila before going to his home.

Miraculous waters

On April 25, 2002, six days after his 65th birthday, Estrada was arrested at his Polk St. residence. Some 5,000 policemen were mobilized to secure the area and seize through warrants Estrada's assets.

Looking back, Estrada said he probably owes his good health to the "prayers" that have been offered for him by family, friends and supporters.

While undergoing trial, Estrada underwent several Glaser angioplasty procedures to unclog his heart. He also underwent cataract surgery in a Makati hospital.

Estrada said he was also miraculously healed from cancer in public with his chiefs, prosecutor showing are growing wounds.

Time for self

What could be less secure with all the worry and painful blows that he has been through?

"I will set aside time for myself. I do not make decisions when I'm angry and I don't make promises when I'm happy," the jovial ex-President said.

Estrada is also expected to meet today's birthday bought to meet with the Senator Opposition senatorial ticket.

Despite court restrictions against making campaign-related speeches, Estrada has already used those public outings to hit out with hostile rhetoric against the Arroyo administration and the ruling coalition candidates.

Asked what he would consider the best birthday gift, the response was almost instantaneous: A "decisive" victory for the GO bloc.

His other wishes are for "enlightenment to continue in the mainstream," and his "my name to be vindicated."

LP set to consolidate

But Comelec douses cold water on bid to be dominant minority

By Norman Bordadora and Jeanne Aring

LIBERAL PARTY RED MENGGO AQUINO-III yesterday said the party leadership will call for elections of new officers immediately after the May elections and called on the LP bets to endorse Manila Mayor Lito Atienza so as to set aside their differences and rally behind the leadership of Sen. Perfecto Yasay.

Aquino, who is running for senator under the Genuine Opposition, also called on local candidates of the Arroyo-led coalition to join the ranks of Liberals under Yasay whose leadership of the party was recognized by the Supreme Court in a decision last Tuesday.

"We have the 2010 elections to participate in other than the 2007 elections to consolidate the party. There must a set of strategies to prepare for presidential elections," Aquino said.

Aquino recently chat bet Mar Roxas said he the 20% standard known as the 2010 presidential elections. Roxas dropped the senatorial elections in 2004. He claimed the Liberal Party would be the dominant political party by 2010.

Aquino said the Supreme Court ruling strengthened the LP's position because the Commission on Elections has declared the dominant opposition party which should get the sixth copy of the election returns. The sixth copy is used as the basis for election appreciation.

The Comelec however immediately threw cold water on Aquino's assumptions.

The poll body yesterday said it would issue as independents all candidates running under the Atienza wing when the Supreme Court decision becomes final.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. also said the LP's bid for dominant minority party status would be affirmed by the ruling.

This view becomes the Comelec would exclude the members of the dominant wing in determining the credentials of the LP-led political party.

Only those running under the Drilon wing would be considered when the Comelec finally determines which of the political parties would be declared dominant majority and minority liberals said.

He said the Comelec would have to choose the dominant minority party from among the LD United Opposition, Lakas- ng Demokratikong Pilipino, Nacionalista People's Coalition and Aksyon Demokratiko.

As for the LP Atienza wing, Abalos said it was "too late" for the Manila mayor to form his own party unless it is accredited with the Comelec.

But Atienza's camp is going with the administration, Abalos said it could enter into an agreement with Lakas, or the Kampi or the Nationalist People's Coalition or it can chose to. But copy of the election returns, as he adopted by these parties.

The dominant minority party is entitled to a copy of the election returns while the an major parties are allowed to one poll watcher each in all voting precincts and canvassing centers during the elections.

Aquino, vice chair of the LP Drilon wing, said he would ask Drilon and the rest of the party leaders to seek time to draw cards local candidates from the Atienza group if they decide to recognize Drilon's presidency.

"The [Supreme Court] decision an emphasis the party's led as the dominant party in 2010. I expect a deluge of candidates wanting to come to the LP fold in the absence of well-known political machinery to back their candidacies," Aquino said.

Aquino said independents in elections at San Francisco Magdiwang are the only LP candidates recognized by the Drilon leadership.

"I will recommend to the LP leadership [that it] welcome into its ranks candidates for local office, including those from the Atienza camp," he added.

The administration Team Unity candidate Wilfredo Enriquez, former chief of staff to the President, is also a member of the LP but is allied with the Atienza group.

The LP split in 2005 when the Drilon leadership demanded the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the wake of the Hello Garci controversy and allegations of electoral fraud against Malacañang.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld the petition of the Drilon wing to stop the Comelec from calling for elections of LP officers.

The Comelec said that the March 2 barangay elections called by the Atienza wing could not be a true LP elections.

Drilon said that the calling of elections by the Comelec violated the party's constitutionally protected right "to association and not a bid and despite on president. Just understand the autonomy and integrity of political parties in this country."

Meanwhile, Abalos advised the various opposition political parties to settle the issue of the dominant party among themselves, as the existence of various opposition groups was complicating the final determination.

He said that in the 2004 elections, there was a forced opposition coalition, the Hakbang ng Maglakbayang Pilipino, that easily got its campaign of the election returns.

In the recent elections, however, this is no longer the case and the LP was very well defined in some opposition party members are running in alliance with the ruling party Lakas-CMD or in associated parties.

Erap takes lead in GO 'revolt'

By Dona Pazdirogan

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA scores into the forefront of the Genuine Opposition (GO) campaign, publicly endorsing its 13 senatorial candidates even amid the opposition's refusal "Revolt."

The new 20-second GO omnibus ad that will air today in time for Estrada's 70th birthday, shows the former president in a fighting mood, asking voters to choose his candidates as a rebuke of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Mga botante ng Bayan, Ako po ang hilingin, ilaban natin ang ating karapatan. Ang ating mga kandidato ay ipinagpilitan nila na hindi sila bibilhin, ipinagpilitan nila na hindi sila bibilhin, ipinagpilitan nila na hindi sila bibilhin,

Campbell's body found; foul play eyed

From page A1

a deep gorge along the creek, and how she was buried are clear signs that her killer or killers tried to hide the body," said Senior Supt. Pedro Gamil, Bagao police director.

Gamil ruled out the possibility that Campbell might have accidentally fallen off the cliff.

Protruding toe

"The body was buried with mud, and it appears that the suspect(s) even used digging tools. If the killing was not intentional, then (whoever buried the body) should have reported the incident to the police," he added.

Gamil said robbery and rape were possible motives in the killing.

Gamil said Senator saw the victim's toe protruding from the soil, apparently dug up by scavenging dogs.

Search operations yesterday began with about 40 volunteers from the Barad Environmental Tour Guides Association (Betag) scouring the slopes of Barad within arms' length of one another.

"We were doing our second simultaneous pass when Barad reported having found the body at around 9:30 a.m.," said Nonoy Espping, president of Betag. The location was about 20 meters below a village road used by locals and tourists and around 200 meters from Barad village's center.

Upon the discovery of the body, police immediately cordoned off the area, including the trail, and advised hikers to use an alternative route.

Gamil said removal operations had been called off at the request of Lt. Indonesio officials, until the arrival of US forensic investigators who would help the local police in the investigation.

Confirmation awaited

In a television interview, Lt. Gilbert Aquiatan confirmed that Lt. Lazarsbay declined to confirm if the body found in Barad indeed belonged to Campbell.

He said the embassy had yet to receive official confirmation from its staff sent to Bontoc.

Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres, an Army spokesperson, said the police and military were searching for a team of pathologists from Japan to identify the body and determine the cause of death.

Torres said the team was expected to arrive in Baguio today. Retrieval operations were also expected today.

Robert Karpowski, a US Embassy official, and David Brett, a representative of the US Peace Corps, declined to issue statements on reporters here, citing affidavit protocol.

Campbell was one of 117 Peace Corps volunteers in the Philippines. She started teaching English at the Divine Word College of Legazpi City in October 2006.

Treacherous terrain

US Peace Corps director Ronald Tschetter flew by helicopter over Banaue on Tuesday and later drove to the area to monitor the massive search for Campbell.

"I can understand why people would want to hike in the area," he told journalists at the US Embassy in Manila before leaving of the body's discovery.

"It's gorgeous — but it's rugged, and the paths, the hiking trails in some places, are very narrow," he said, adding that the terrain was "a lot treacherous, with very steep gorges."

Tschetter, wearing blue denim jeans, a black shirt and a shawl, was last seen on April 9 buying soda from a store in Banaue.

She had bought a bus ticket to go to Manila by April 9, indicating she did not plan to extend her stay or make a long hike to a spot to look at the rice terraces, he said. With reports from Volunteer Player Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon, AP

Julia brought cheer where there was gloom

From page A1

working with the evacuees for the next couple of days.

"I am not against last December, along with other Peace Corps volunteers who put up a Christmas tree, made a snowman, cooked food and organized a Christmas party for the young survivors of the supertyphoon) shortly after the disaster.

She told me she had worked through semi-deep floodwaters brought by Reming, but what the news through in a volunteer teacher based in Legazpi City at that time was nothing compared to what the children had experienced.

"They are too young to experience such a great disaster and it was really hard for them to understand everything," Julia said of the young survivors.

She revealed the story of 10-year-old Alonica, who had lost her family except her mother in the moment of mind and smile. When Alonica was rescued, both her mother and her whole body no longer her heart was buried to mud.

Campbell was a journalist for The New York Times and various other newspapers for 15 years. She said she decided to leave her job and join the Peace Corps after the Sept. 11 World Trade Center bombing.

Americans aren't all bad

"I lived near Ground Zero," Julia said. "I wanted to show people in the world what America is really like because after 9/11, people had the impression that Americans are bad, selfish and greedy."

She added that most of them in the Peace Corps were not rich. Most came from the middle class and involved in relative, campaigns who have not been charged. As a result, blank spaces appear in several sentences of the memo.

Aquino's lawyer, Mark A. Bertram, was preceding a trial on Tuesday and did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

Unusual

Bertram has said that Aquino should have less than four years in prison. It is unusual for a defendant who pleads guilty to get the maximum term.

Aquino, 41, pleaded guilty in July but put in a bid that opened him a life term if he is convicted of espionage.

Aquino-Oli, 46, a former Marine who worked nursing in 1999 as a military aide to Vice President Al Gore and Bob Clinton, pleaded guilty to four charges in May last year.

The most serious charge, conspiracy to transmit national defense information, can carry the death penalty. But under a plea agreement, Aquino-Oli only faces 12 to 20 years in prison.

After retiring from the Marines, Aquino-Oli became a civilian employee of the FBI, working at Fort Monmouth, in central New Jersey. He is a native of Aparri, Cagayan province, and is married to a Filipina.

Aquino-Oli admitted passing information to Aquino and unidentified politicians in his hometown who wanted to oust Mr. Arroyo.

Recipients included former Philippine President Joseph Estrada, who was ousted six years ago and is currently detained on plunder charges; Sen. Panfilo Lacson, an opposition leader who is seeking reelection in the May balloting; and former House Speaker Jaime Fernandez, according to earlier court documents.

Estrada and Lacson have attributed US critics who was born in the Philippines.

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Estrada and Lacson have attributed US critics who was born in the Philippines.

Campbell was supposed to be back here on April 10, a day before the school's graduation rites.

She missed graduation day

"We were wondering why Julia did not appear on graduation day. It was unusual because she was always on time and would inform us whenever she had a problem that could cause her absence," Gallano said.

Before she left, Julia gave the latter her set of books and CDs of instructional materials, saying she was going down to the city perimeter as it could use them where she's gone.

Gallano and Julia was very happy that day.

Volunteers from the US 9600 Hands On Disaster Response (VHOR) in Legazpi City have directed its reports that a body possibly that of Campbell, had been found in Bagao. (See banner story on Page A1.)

"I feel like I had been hit hard in the face the school's graduation rites.

Director Marc Young said in a phone interview from his base in Sri. Domingo town, describing her as an "outgoing" volunteer who had linked up the group with efforts of permission.

'We lost someone dear'

"We're hoping that it was an accident and that she didn't suffer so much," Irish teacher Barbara Lacy said in an interview from Bontoc, gay that broke without the said.

A volunteer's was reeling a school building.

"It's going to be quiet here tonight. We lost someone dear to our life. We'll share in our grief on her passing tonight," Young, 46, an American living here, said. With a report from Tj Burgonio

Ex-Lacson aide faces 10-year jail term in US

From page A1

government outweighed any benefit he should receive for accepting responsibility in the conspiracy — a plot that involved the theft of classified national defense documents from the White House and the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation].

In a memo to the federal judge, where he maintains Aquino-Oli, fully pleaded guilty and "has also passed a "danger to the national security, including the foreign relations, of the United States" by attempting to destabilize and overthrow Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The 39-page memo was filed on Monday with the US District Court in Newark, with sentencing memos are generally not made public because they often contain information from grand jury proceedings, which are secret, investigators.

But US District Judge William H. Walls ordered the documents released after The Star-Ledger of Newark protested, asserting the case was of public importance.

Prosecutors, who in sentencing Aquino and former FBI intelligence analyst Leandro Aragoncillo, said the memo could be made public after the deletion of national security information and the names of people and

Most countries don't trust US but RP staunchest supporter

From page A1

In Israel, 99 percent in Australia and 51 percent in Ireland.

In contrast, other countries show a lack of confidence that the United States would act responsibly and a sense that it had overreached on the global stage.

A majority of respondents in 10 countries — Chile (percent), Peru (82 percent), Mexico (73 percent), France (72 percent), Australia (56 percent), Indonesia (66 percent), China (59 percent), Thailand (56 percent), South Korea (54 percent), India (52 percent) said more than a third of those in Australia (40 percent) and Ukraine (37 percent) answered "not at all" or "not very much" when asked how much they trusted the United States "to act responsibly in the world," the poll found.

Global policeman

While there is broad international frustration with how the United States conducts its foreign policy, few people around the world want it to completely back off its role as a global policeman.

"There's clearly a trend in terms of declining negative attitudes about the US and a resistance to foreign policy" said Christopher Whitney, executive director for studies at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs that helped coordinate the 15-country study.

The United States has long faced criticism internationally for its unilateralist foreign policy, Whitney said.

Frustration broader, deeper

The survey has found that the frustration is broader in scope than previously thought and has deepened in the wake of the war in Iraq.

But mixed with this frustration is an understanding that the United States has a significant role to play internationally and should not withdraw completely, Whitney said.

He noted that there was an consistent support for closing US military bases overseas and that many respondents felt that close bilateral relationship with the United States was improving.

"It is not a unanimous message of 'we don't want the US to be involved,' it's more nuanced," Whitney said.

More cooperative role

"They just want the US to play a more cooperative role and be a more constructive international player in terms of working through international organizations and listening to allies and friends when they have concerns," he said.

More than three out of four Americans think their country needs to take on the role of international enforcer more than it should.

Large majorities elsewhere also felt that way: France at 89 percent, Australia at 83 percent, Chile at 77 percent, Russia at 74 percent, Peru at 70 percent, the Palestinian territories at 74 percent, South Korea at 73 percent, Indonesia at 68 percent, Mexico at 67 percent, Armenia at 63 percent, Argentina at 61 percent and India at 53 percent.

Abu Sayyaf

Only one country surveyed had a majority of respondents who disagreed: the Philippines with 57 percent. Israeli respondents were split at an even 46 percent.

The United States has seen fears and was stunned by the Philippines vow to help it fight the Abu Sayyaf Group, an Islamic militant group linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda and the regional terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah.

The countries, including the United States, surveyed by the survey represent roughly 50 percent of the world's population.

The respondents, who were chosen randomly, were interviewed either on the telephone or in person from June 2006 to March 2007. The surveys had margins of error ranging from 1.3 to 4.8 percentage points. AFP

Extreme heat triggers surge in power demand, brownouts

From page A1

months at around 10 a.m.

Beating the scorching heat became doubly difficult because of the high humidity and power outages.

Hottest so far

Temperatures shot up to 38.6 degrees Centigrade in Metro Manila on Tuesday, the hottest recorded so far this year by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

The temperature dropped slightly to 37.5 degrees between 2 p.m and 3 p.m. yesterday at the the Pagasa headquarters in Quezon City.

But the coming days will be even hotter, Pagasa chief Prisco Nilo said.

"We expect this kind of temperature to continue until May before the start of the rainy season," Nilo said in a phone interview.

Drink lots of liquid

For now, the people will just have to drink lots of liquid and wear protective clothing, among other measures, before going out in areas that strike, he said.

The highest temperature, 42.2 degrees Centigrade, was recorded in Tuguegarao, Cagayan, on May 2, 1969.

Responding to the power supply deficit, the Lopez-led Meralco, the country's biggest distribution utility, started implementing a rotated load reduction in 19 to 24 hours.

Meralco said that prior to the load shedding, its supply shortfall yesterday had reached as much as 450 MW.

Red alert

Earlier in the day, at around 8 a.m., National Transmission Corp. had declared a system red alert as the Luzon grid due to a lack of system reserve.

That caused serious strain with in the Southern Tagalog area to suffer from power outages. Similar scenes set off of Metro Manila, Cavite and Bicol, and parts of Batangas, Laguna, Quezon and Batangas.

By noon, Napocor said the Bataan plants was back on line, paving the way for the normalization of the Luzon power situation by late afternoon.

The state firm explained that the country was experiencing a dramatic increase in power demand due to the scorching summer heat.

"Last year, the highest demand for electricity was recorded in May. Yesterday, April 17, the demand rose significantly by 200 MW over the forecast 6,400 MW for the period," Napocor said.

High humidity

It said it was utilizing all available power plants, including those running on coal, natural gas and diesel, to address the situation.

"We are also making sure that these power plants are running reliably and efficiently," Napocor said.

Pagasa predicted a slightly warmer air temperature for April, ranging from 35-36 degrees near the mountainous areas in Luzon, 34-36 degrees for the rest of Luzon, 33-34 degrees over the Visayas, 31-33 degrees over the mountainous areas of Mindanao, and 32-34 degrees for the rest of Mindanao.

Cruz pointed out that people felt warmer than the actual temperature, and more uncomfortable because of the high humidity.

"It's normal, we don't perspire. And if we don't perspire, we don't feel any coolness in our body. So that if the temperature is 36 degrees, you feel like it's 38 degrees," he said. "Relative humidity plays an important role in human comfort."

Tell anyoung, old

This interaction of temperature and humidity takes its toll most on the young and the old, especially those who are ailing, he said.

Pagasa predicted that high temperatures would persist until May because there were no signs that the rainy season would set in earlier this year.

Contrary to perception, the dry season would peak next month.

But rainfall in April, when it's humid throughout the day, in May Metro Manila and other parts of the country would experience refreshing thunderstorms in the afternoon, according to Cruz.

GMA orders 10% hike in SSS pension

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO TODAY ordered another 10-percent across-the-board increase in retirement pensions, and likened the overhaul and insolvency of the Social Security System (SSS) to the central open-heart surgery that recently gave her husband a new lease on life.

Mrs. Arroyo, speaking during the 56th anniversary of the SSS in a hotel in Quezon City, rescinded the threatened collapse of the country's largest private pension fund "because collections went to 'unworthy investments.'"

She said the painful adjustments that were made since 2001 has led to its long-term, sustained recovery for the benefit of its 27 million members—1.3 million of whom are pensioners.

It was Mr. Arroyo's first public speaking engagement since her husband underwent the 10-hour surgery Easter Sunday to fix a leaking aorta.

"Now it's only 10th anniversary as my satisfaction, my request, to our board is maybe let's gift the Filipino people with another 10-percent increase in benefits this year," the President said, to the applause of SSS employees.

In September last year, the President had also ordered a 10-percent raise to civil service pensions, according to SSS president Corazon de la Paz.

Aside from retirement pensions, the increase also covers disability and death benefits. Pensions range from P1,000 to P10,665.

However, the SSS has also increased the employee's contributions for each member, from 9.4 percent in 2003 to 10.4 percent starting January this year.

Mr. Arroyo said that through its retirement program last year, the SSS was also able to collect P1.7 billion in delinquent contributions and restored 200,000 members to good standing.

"As a result of the SSS reform program, we are really very happy and we must be very proud that the actuarial life of the fund has been extended from 2015 to 2036," she said.

Contrasting the comparison with her husband's open collapse and recovery, she said the wound that the Pine Genie man was still running down joint-ly.

"My husband was operated on and God's necessary if not has a serious ailment. He is still running a lower but that's part of the post-operative considerations. But what will happen afternoon is long-term sustained recovery and that's what has been done with the SSS, that's what has been done with the national government," Mr. Arroyo said.

In her same speech, he in May said the SSS Reserve Fund has increased by at most 11-percent, from P195.3 billion in 2005, to P222 billion last year.

Invest SMC proceeds in tutors' shelter, GSIS urged

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO, CONservator chairman of Erasing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, has urged the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) to invest a significant portion of the proceeds it realized from the sale of its stake in San Miguel Corporation to provide subsidies-driven socialized housing for public school teachers and other government employees.

De Castro made the suggestion after the GSIS sold its six-percent stake in food conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMC) for P16 billion and indicated plans to fund a major socialized housing project.

"I was glad that in a potential income for our government workers in finally have their own houses, through the invaluable help of GSIS, PAG-IBIG (Home) schemes, their dreams of owning shelters have been remade. I just hope GSIS can help out its member-teachers fulfill those dreams," De Castro said in a press statement.

De Castro noted that the government had set for housing completes only 0.3 percent (or one-fifth of one percent) of the total budget that would be allocated to provide affordable housing to low-income people.

However, De Castro said the GSIS has been previously engaged in housing projects for government employees. He recalled that in the 1980s, the GSIS opened several housing projects for teachers and other government employees, one of which was the GSIS La Mesa Homesite in Lagro, Quezon City.

"My sister, who was then a public school teacher, was one of the beneficiaries of that GSIS housing program. I really hope GSIS would again invest into these kinds of projects for our state teachers," De Castro said.

"I heard GSIS president Winston Garcia mention that part of the proceeds of the sale would be for real estate development. I hope the GSIS allots a portion for our teachers and other government employees. And I will ensure the housing agencies' full cooperation to enhance that it becomes a viable investment," De Castro said.

Earlier, Vice President pointed out that this proposed entitlement to state teachers is not even enough to give back to our teachers their due despite the invaluable years of dedicated service they have given to the nation and to children for measly salaries.

"Imagine that our teachers have adequate shelter in the least that we could do," he said.

Comelec approves cyberads

THE COMMISSION on Elections has accredited a group of Internet advertisers to accept political propaganda and campaign ads for the elections.

In Resolution No. 7866 promulgated April 17, the Commission on Information Technology and Electronic Commerce (Comelec) has accredited 'yearnie' digital media campaign ads through its Media Ads Definitive Program.

Included accredited 10 companies that are ad online companies to put their ads on the top of a computer screen and show pictures of different political candidates.

When the picture of a candidate is clicked by the user, a webpage containing the candidate's platform of the candidate would appear on the screen. Anyone doing

UNIONBANK

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

April 3, 2007

TO: ALL STOCKHOLDERS

Please be advised that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of Unionbank of the Philippines will be held at the Garden Ballroom of the EDSA Shangri-la Hotel, 1 Garden Way, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City on Friday, **May 25, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.**

The Agenda for the said meeting will be as follows:

I. Calling the Roll
II. Proof of Notice of Meeting
III. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 26, 2006 and the Special Stockholders' Meeting on August 3, 2006
IV. Chairman/CEO's Report to Stockholders – Mr. Jose A. Cuisi
V. Annual Report of Management on Operations for 2006 – Presidents Victor B. Valdepeñas
VI. Appointment of External Auditor
VII. Amendment of Unionbank's articles of incorporation by the inclusion of a provision denying the shareholder's preemptive rights
VIII. Election of Directors for 2007 – 2008 term
IX. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record as of **April 11, 2007** will be entitled to attend and participate at the above meeting.

For your information. Thank you.

Very truly yours,
(Sgd.) ATTY. FE B. MACALINO
Corporate Secretary

TALES OF HEROISM

Holocaust survivor gives life to save students

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA—AMID THE horror at Virginia Tech were tales of heroism during the rampage, including an older professor—himself a Holocaust survivor—who gave his life to protect his students.

Romanian-born Liviu Librescu, a dual US-Israeli citizen, moved two decades ago to the United States where he taught in the Engineering Science and Mechanics Department at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Although he was 76, long past the usual retirement age, he was still teaching at Virginia Tech on Monday when shots erupted in Norris Hall, the campus building where a gunman identified as Cho Seung-hui, 23, opened fire, killing 32 people before committing suicide.

Students described how the septuagenarian Librescu used his body to bar his students the door against Cho as they could escape by jumping out the classroom's second-floor window. Some broke legs in the fall, but they survived. Librescu was shot to death during the rampage.

An impromptu shrine to the professor was set up on the campus, with flowers and his picture.

LIBRESCU

"He was an exceptionally tolerant man who mentored scholars from all over our troubled world," Mimi Peri, his department head, said in a statement distributed widely on the media.

"The people of Israel grieve with all who have been touched by this horrible tragedy and pray for the speedy and complete recovery of the wounded and for the families of those who lost their loved ones," Israel's ambassador to the United States, Sallai Meridor, said.

Julia Pruitt, 20, a Virginia Tech graduate whose son now attends the university, said Librescu's story moved her to tears. "That was an amazing story. That was what inside me really lost it," she said.

Students who survived the massacre at Norris Hall spoke of school janitors who, as Cho opened fire upstairs, ran to help others instead of saving themselves.

"The janitors were running through, and told everyone to get out," said Nick Mertz, 20, of Bartley, Virginia, who was in the first-to-fall classroom after Cho began his attack two floors above.

In a rhythm that upstairs, a few students tried to barricade the door against the onslaught of bullets, and then tried to help their injured classmates while they waited for help. Trey Perkins, 20, told Fox News.

Of 31 students in his class, he said only about six came out alive.

Many students were the school's colors of orange and maroon as a sign of solidarity on Tuesday. Many said they were shocked and ashamed as the names of the victims began to trickle out, and they faced an onslaught of media and investigators.

But they said they were heartened by the stories of heroism.

"It's one of those things where every little thing you do can save somebody's life," Mertz said. "The only thing we can do is get through this thing as a heroine to each other." Reuters

THE HEALING BEGINS: A student in wake for murders at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, V... America's history.

Virginia Tech students, people from all over the world gather o

CHICAGO—HORRIBLE, REAL-world happenings are unfolding almost simultaneously in the virtual world, as Virginia Tech students and people from all over the world gather online to grieve and vent.

Almost immediately after Monday's deadly shootings, Virginia Tech students created an "I'm OK" page on Facebook to let one another and their friend ones know that they survived. Other students posted photos and cell phone videos to their web sites or shared it just hours after the shootings with news organizations.

Since Monday, there has been a seemingly flood of postings on the popular Facebook student site, on MySpace and LiveJournal, and on personal blogs...everyone everything from grief to anger to confusion.

Jesse Connelly, a 21-year-old from Lynn, Massachusetts, made a posting Tuesday on the MySpace page of Nate Mainardi, one of the students who died. The pair worked together last summer at an electronics store in their home town.

"I still you were here to read this from ... You'd know what an imaginative, intelligent, compassionate and most of all hysterically funny human being you were, and how appreciative I am to have spent last summer work-

ing with such a great kid," Connelly wrote. "My every thought is with you and your family."

Memorial pages for dead

Even before names of the victims were officially released, a few students created Facebook memorial pages for some of the dead—though others worried that it was too soon, since family and friends were still being notified.

There are myriad other ways the Internet continues to shape the grieving process.

In addition to using the university's website to communicate with the world, Virginia Tech officials planned to set up a site where families of the victims could post photos.

Symbolism runs a rate for Virginia Tech sports fans, also quickly morphed into a viewing place where students, family and friends could communicate—especially when phone networks were jammed.

And as a show of support, many students, including scores from other colleges, replaced their Facebook profile photos with a Virginia Tech logo shrouded in a black ribbon.

Racist remarks

Not Jacobs, a junior at Gustavus College in Buffalo, New York, was among those saddened by the shootings, she went months

ing for memo... book or Face...

Jacobs was o... as some surv... chided hateful... made remark... but, other hate...

"This is not ... and his profile ... "We—he ident... all the damag... yesterday—in... this one tra...

Portrait of a mass killer: Who is Cho?

From page A1

Cho," said Ian MacFarlane, a former classmate of Cho's who participated in the killer's playwriting class.

He went "a loner, obsessed with violence and serious personal problems," MacFarlane said in an article on aol.com sent to links to the two plays, "Richard McBird" and "Mr. Brownstone."

Last testament

In the end, Cho's writings may serve as his last testament and offer the only clues to his motive.

One of his plays chronicles a 12-year-old boy's ongoing fight with his stepfather. Thereafter, Matt kill Dick. Matt kill Dick. Dick must die." The boy stalls a sword but draws his stepfather's throat. Then, the older man "lifts the large white and wedges it deadly close."

The other play refers to music from the Guns 'N Roses song "Mr. Brownstone," and tells of a group of 17-year-olds who skip school to partake of a riotous and fantasize about killing their professor.

"Such an old man, stupid, wicked man," says Joe.

"I wanna kill him," says John.

"I wanna watch him bleed like the way he made us kids bleed," says Jane.

The writings were so disturbing that his professor had pulled him from class, CNN reported.

"There were several of us in English who became concerned when we had him in class, for our own reasons. And so I contacted some people in an effort to get some help for him because I was deeply concerned," Lucinda Roy, one of Cho's professors, said.

'You caused me to do this'

Stephanie Derry, who studied playwriting with Cho, told the school newspaper, Collegiate Times, that the gunman's drama was "really morbid and grotesque" and that other students used to joke about his essays.

ABC News and the Chicago Tribune reported Tuesday that Cho left a long, rambling note in his dormitory room, railing against "rich kids," "debauchery" and "distasteful frat houses" on campus.

"You caused me to do this," he wrote.

Cho also fired with the words "Ismail Ax" in red ink on the inside of one of his arms, the Tribune reported, citing unidentified sources.

2,800 foreigners

Police suspect Cho first killed two people at a campus dormitory, then returned to his own dorm to recite the rambling invective, swarm and then storm the classroom building where he chained shut the doors and snuffed from room to room killing 30 people and himself.

Cho was among the 2,000 foreigners from more than 120 countries attending the 30,000-student university in Blacksburg, Virginia. Cho's family lived in Centreville, Virginia, a suburb of Washington.

The Tribune said Cho's family was a dry cleaning business while his entire graduating class the elite Princeton University.

South Korea's government expressed "indescribable surprise and shock" after Cho was identified.

Cho had shown recent signs of violent, alternate behavior, including setting a fire in a dorm room and allegedly stalking some women, the Tribune said, citing an unnamed investigative source.

Investigators believe Cho at some point had been taking medication for depression, the daily said.

Profile of mass murderer

The lone gunman is the most common profile for a mass murderer, someone who is "isolated, redoubtive and antisocial" said Adam Lanzlehr, director of workplace psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University.

"It's not exactly clear what triggers," he said. "Some of it is personalized, but it can also could make up that day and decide, 'I'm going to create social havoc.'"

With classes canceled for the rest of the week, many students left town in a hurry, lugging pillows, sleeping bags and backpacks down the sidewalks.

On Tuesday night, thousands of Virginia Tech students, faculty and area residents poured into the center of campus to gather. Witnesses passed out thousands of candles in paper cups, distanced from around the country. Then, as the Times Behavior, speakers urged them to find solace in one another.

'We will move on'

"We will move on from this. But it will take the strength of each other to do that," said Jacobs Allen, vice president for student affairs. "We want the world to know we are Virginia Tech, we will recover, we will survive with your prayers."

As others spread across the grassy Drillfield, a sea of marquee lights flickered in the crowd began to sing "Amazing Grace."

Afterward, students, some weeping, others holding each other for support, moved around makeshift memorials, of banners and plywood boards with paper bearing their pass.

"Our hearts will be heavy, our tears will fall and our questions never really answered," one wrote.

"I think this is something that will stay with us. It will hurt for a lot of people to," Amber McGee, a freshman from Pulaski, Virginia. Reports from AP, AFP and Re...

...demic during a convocation today after the mass ...Virginia, the deadliest in shooting rampage in ...

...nline to grieve

...ted pages on this ...ty involving ...llowed when the d... ...served pages for a ... ...ssembles memo... ...Hokies Cle Sharp ...casualties family ...Facebook user ...ed it as ostensible tri... ...e and post cannot ...e the causes for ...ts (yes, for child...

Arroyo extends sympathy to kin of victims

PRESIDENT MACA... ...expressed her ... sympathy to the fam... ...ilies of those gunned ... down in the deadliest ... campus shooting in ... US history.

In a statement, she ... said:

"We are one with the world in condol... ...ating with their families ... of the casualties ... killings in Virginia Tech University. "Her... ...tantaneous invulnera... ...magnificent by record ... keep all campuses safe and secure as all ... times in memories ... of learning for the ... youth. She other ... prayers and sympa... ...thies to the grieving families, students, staff and faculty of Virginia Tech Universi... ...ty and to the people ... of the United States during this difficult time," she said.

Shooter's family struggled in Seoul; Koreans express deep shock, apologize

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—THE family of the gunman in the Virginia Tech shootings had struggled while living in South Korea and emigrated to the United States to seek a better life, a newspaper reported yesterday.

The shooter was identified as Cho Seung-hui, a senior in the university's English department, who, the South Korean foreign ministry said had been living in the United States since 1992. Cho was the only suspect named in the deadliest shooting rampage in US history which left 33 dead including himself.

South Korea's largest newspaper Chosun Ilbo reported that Cho's family ran a store where he lived in a block-walled-and-double-door-gate in north-eastern Seoul.

The family lived in a rented, two-room apartment—usually the cheapest unit in a multi-apartment building, the newspaper reported quoting its owner. Police identified the shooter's father as Cho Seong-tae, 61.

'They lived a poor life'

"I didn't know what (Cho's father) did for a living. But they lived a poor life," Lim told the newspaper. "While cramming, (Cho's father) said that work going to America because it is difficult to live here and that it's better to live in a place where he is a minority."

The small apartment where the family lived is now vacant and no home door was left unlocked Wednesday. Children scampered the pale blue walls of the three-room residence, which is no larger than 40 square meters.

At the Hankyung Elementary School that Cho attended for first grade and half of second grade, there were no records of the former student. Seoul Education Office said Aug. 13, 2002, officials said.

Public shame

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun held a special meeting with aides yesterday to discuss the shooting, as the public expressed shame over a Seoul-born on citizen being identified as the gunman.

"I and our people express our sorrow, our feelings of huge shock and grief," said Roh during a cabinet meeting, in comments released by Prime Minister Han Duck-Soo. "I pray for the souls of those killed and offer words of comfort from my heart for those injured, the bereaved families and the US people."

It was the third time that Roh has offered condolences since Tuesday. Roh also sent a similar message yesterday to US President George W. Bush, his office said.

The case sapped the front pages of nearly all South Korean newspapers yesterday, which featured stories that the incident may trigger racial hatred in the United States and worsen relations between the two countries.

Fears of discrimination

"My hope that this incident won't create short-sighted and prejudice against people of [each] nation or [from origin]," said the Hankyoreh newspaper in an editorial.

A sense of despair pervaded among South Korean public.

"The new shameful date I'm a South Korean," wrote an Internet user identified only by the ID dinjjinli on the country's top Web portal site, Naver, among hundreds of messages on the issue. "As a South Korean, I feel apologetic to the Virginia Tech victims."

Han Myung-kyung, a South Korean resident in Virginia Tech exacerbates telephone from Seoul, said there were about 500 Koreans in the school, including many ex-Americans.

South Korea has more students studying in the United States than any other country, according to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

South Korean students

The number of South Korean students totalled 93,720 as of the end of last year, 14.6 percent of the total, ahead of Indian 76,700 and China's 50,000, according to a February report to enable agency.

Despite being academically a state of sorts for decades against South Korea, South Korea is a country where children are banned from privately owning guns, and where no school shootings are known to have occurred.

However, in fact not been immune from choosing rampages.

In 2005, a military conscript believed to be angered by transfers to certain colonies killed eight fellow soldiers, thereafter a grenade into barracks where five comrades were sleeping and firing ahead of bullets.

South Korea was also the scene of one of the world's deadliest shootings sprees, when police officer Shim Byung-gyu opened on a rampage in 2002 in the southeastern village of Kyeongsang, killing 16 people and wounding 20 others. AP

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OPINION

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Poor statistics

THIS COULD BE ANOTHER CASE OF THE DEVIL quoting the Scriptures, leading to the question: Who is the devil?

EDITORIAL

Internet reporter Doris Dumlao, writing from Washington, D.C., reported earlier this week that the World Bank found 14.6 million Filipinos forced to survive on less than $1 per day in the year 2000. That meant that one out of every 75 people (1.5 percent) living in extreme poverty all over the world was a Filipino, and almost one out of every five Filipinos was dirt poor. In the same year, about 43 million out of the country's total population of 76.5 million were living on less than $2 per day, the international measure for less extreme poverty. The incomes report was based on the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI) 2007.

Malacañang, however, said those dire statistics were "outdated" and "grossly misleading." Domingo Panganiban, head secretary of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, said the correct number of Filipinos surviving on less than $1 per day was 10.5 million or 13.5 percent of the 2000 population instead of 15 percent as the WDI indicated. Better yet, he said, the percentage of Filipinos considered extremely poor was expected to have fallen below 10 percent in 2006 and to go further down to 8.4 percent this year. Panganiban was quoting—what else?—the World Bank, or more precisely its publication titled "East Asia Update: Managing Through a Global Downturn."

Confusing? Panganiban had an explanation: the WDI 2007 data were not up-to-date and merely reproduced the 2000 statistics while the 2006 "East Asia Update" was more current, being a regional report. In other words, the World Bank is doing such a lousy job of data-gathering and reconciliation that a 2006 report can be more accurate than one published in 2007.

Maybe. But if the World Bank is better sooner than record-keeper, why do record numbers of Filipinos continue to complain of hunger? A survey done by the Social Weather Stations in late February found that some 3.4 million households had experienced involuntary hunger at least once over the previous three months. This translates to about 17 million hungry Filipinos, a much higher number than the 14.6 million mired in extreme poverty based on the WDI 2007.

The same SWS survey also found 53 percent of household heads rating themselves as poor.

At the risk of being accused of mixing apples with oranges, it still bears noting that there seems to be an uncanny congruence between the statistics cited in the WDI 2007 and the results of these surveys. While 19 percent of Filipinos were deemed extremely poor in 2000, the same percentage of Filipinos in 2007 said they had suffered hunger recently. And while 37 percent fell below the less extreme poverty measure of $2 seven years ago, 53 percent of Filipinos surveyed this past month classified themselves among the poor. What all this seems to say is that there has been little or no improvement in the lives of the most disadvantaged Filipinos—at least in their own perception. And if there has been any changes for the better, they have not been as dramatic as the Arroyo administration has tried to paint them, whether it uses World Bank data or its own statistics.

Shocking truth

A NEW POLL HAS REVEALED A SHOCKING TRUTH: MORE than 20,000 children have been left by parents who have emigrated to work abroad. Most of these children—very lonely and deprived of basic care—are raised by strangers. The children tend to become more drawn inside and aggressive.

FOREIGN COMMENT

We often hear loud condemnation of those who kill their loved ones in search of honor guy. But before condemning emigrants, we should ask: what makes people abandon those who are most important to them and travel to a strange land?

The answer is nothing they never had. easy to earn and a brighter future for their children.

Imagine the same 20,000 existing in Lithuania, entering on or of, lowness or humiliating jobs for cold jobs. For most of them, leaving was the only choice. And they can left, the army of unemployed would have been overrun per each be extra rate possible higher.

There is no reason to be angry with people who have decided to sacrifice their children's "today" for a better "tomorrow."

But many young people from working abroad if conditions are better there. The emigrants know that children cannot be left alone too long, and more are immigrants Lithuanian as soon as possible.

LITHUANIAN TIMES (Vilnius, Lithuania)

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Mean streets

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

DOES THE MIND-SET THAT DOMINATES official circles explain why Filipinos often cannot dig up gems from hundredth meter children to life measures of pinching pennies?

Simple act as familiar with the conspicuous of (hunger holes) they're considered income and middle-class prosperity remarkable over recession," writes Judith Nunan of Blue University Bochum in Germany. Toothbrushes appears to be the most common exercise."

Her study is titled "In the Philippine Street and Working Children at Cross City." But its implications ripple out to other Philippine cities where the problem "emerged in the economic recession of the 1980s." The Marcos dispossessed by these bad banks spared the country?

"The participants of the study were by no means the other equally poor countries, like Chile, Paraguay, Cuba or Tanzania, have lower numbers of street children.

"Who might we making hunger"? Unpaid workers at factories? Others in sweat-shops dubbed sin zone in Colombo, they call them "generous" Family expenses use the pandemic phrase "Children in Special Difficult Circumstances."

But no matter how hard "unavoidable" related to economic — only others also measure expenditures — ideas because nobody is surprised and does not," she notes. But the kids' resilience and varying institutions do not outweigh vulnerability. "Some children grow strong enough to find their own way out. Others grow through malnutrition help. The majority do not."

Four figures on the mobile population are hard to pin down. Kids spend long hours on private roads these localities. Some abscond from institutions. Others are "pushed out" by their families, drawn to other provinces. Family crises, jobs, threats of police arrest or from social gangs drive their movements.

The first surveys in 1988 "suggested the number of street children could range from one to three percent of the child and youth population of a city." Metro Cebu had no estimated 35,000. "Fives" rather than "tools" would be a more relevant indicator.

Under these values, the family is secure, a place of love and care. It includes the helpless in time of danger, like frail failed families. Sexual infractions are ignored. Divorce is tribal. Abortion is taboo. Children "are not liabilities to be shunned or deviant children on the streets." And the going way less as fatalism are encouraged for the future-oft, is children finding "not-so-real, pretend-clone lives."

Those living in slums live in decent centers of a more than rich families (who consolidate to political dynasties), a class that middle class and a source of indigents. "Injustice is a given. Society-nobody is here with the same distance." But the middle classes do not suffer silently. Instead, they harassed. As Filipino anthropologist Landa Jocano once remarked: "The importance of the bum, in its understanding Philippine social organization cannot be over-emphasized."

Other countries, however, like Taiwanese home and women is increasingly obsolescing," the study notes. More use the street as a collectively shared space—for working, sleeping and living. "The very people with street children are the ones who are the most vulnerable. It accepts life on the streets as an alternative for those who are deprived of a wholesome childhood but ... actively rejects them and aggressively chases them away."

Those who have the widespread inhibitions or street children. "Very few consider this a problem that should trouble the public," the study found. There's little solidarity with the extremely poor. Only three out of 10 respondents "would be willing to help" and only two-thirds said they would "definitely" or "probably" help a child in distress. Even if they wouldn't have to bother with a fellow person.

Isn't that a systemic crushing of ... what you often more equal? The rare about a Lenten and a priest who called to the rulers side of the street, to they wouldn't have to bother with a fellow person? And both of those are so?

E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com

Again, libel

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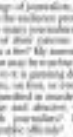
Conrado de Quiros



SOMEONE ASKED ME RECENTLY, BY RESponse to my columns last week on our cases of libel, how one may seek redress from the media for their having wronged us. Should there be a law giving remedies and recourse? Where do we go for filing some of libel, the columns made with Radyo Bombo broadcaster Alex Adona and detained colonel Ret. Lagman. I presumed the first time Adona languishes today in a Davao City jail, while Lagman is on the run. Either case is being treated by the local courts by a blundering judge.

My reply to the interrogator was, I have no problems with people filing libel suits against offending journalists, or those they presume to be. Though while at this, I have the most serious problem with Mayo Pardo doing so against Lagman. It's not just that the Supreme Court itself has found it guilty of the things Lagman accused it of. It is that for rights, by power and by fiat, its officials should even now be talking on their knees and begging our forgiveness for having built by trust the one thing we worked so hard to get, which is computerized election, which is just as good as impeachment, though less cumbersome to the ears.

I have my problems with people filing libel cases against offending journalists, or those they presume to be, in that I have many painful memories of how the libel law has been used to cover problems with politicians convicted of libel being fined and made to apologize publicly for things they have said or written. But pulling them, in threatening them with jail, is a case worse than the disease. It does not have the same gravity of offense.

Let me be clear. I am aware of the menace of media. The things that journalists are often driven to write, if not wrongs, is not exaggerated. That is one of the reasons I cannot routinely the idea of censoring journalists or their conducted themselves from those who mean them harm. We do that and we add to the number of people who offend society and can do the public harm. In the provisions on punishable journalists are not always the high regard. They are licensed, but they are not loved. The complaints I've heard about the capacity of cable commentators, in particular, to

Editorial Cartoon by Nonoy Orendain

Surveys' credibility on the block

IS A RECENT SURVEY HEADLINE TITLED "Abalon on 2010," the Manila Standard Today asked. "To what extent can a survey accurately 'tell' us anyone's ratings without pinpointing its own credibility?" The paper was reacting to a survey audio entitled "Pulso Asean" conducted by the Social Weather Stations from March 31 to April 3, Metro Manila commissioned by the October Opposition. The paper said that the 1900 survey questions involved a heavy slant and thus intended to smear public opposition to the Arroyo administration.

The results did have an effect, it claimed, but the details of the landed questions was enough for SWS's partisans to smash the 2400 credibility, integrity and lack of professionalism. It also employed a clumsy use a Committee investigation of survey results and methodologies, and the alleged manipulation of public sentiments for or against certain groups.

* * *

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cuaresma

I believe that the future of Filipinos will be brighter if most of the opposition economist minds recovered.

Banker and financial analyst Ina Ocsa, commenting on those hooked on the latest survey questions, opined that it's not being asked, "Don't you husband still beat you up?" However we answered the questions, Ocsa aptly pointed out, the notion that the respondents involved knows up cannot be denied.

* * *

Personally, I don't see anything wrong with GO or Team Unity scrutinizing the SWS or other private polling companies to gauge public sentiment whenever they group believes said companies' surveys incorrectly entail enormous expenses and serve firms need the contracts to be able to exist and work. But privately contracted surveys should be done in the open for the public to examine. If the results have to be publicly disclosed, then the polling firm should disclose that the survey has been paid for, who the commissioning party is and the questions put forward, so that the public can judge the results for itself.

The problem with survey groups is that all too often their survey studies easily disclosable. Instead, they seek to give the public the impression that the surveys are thoroughly vetted and objective, when in fact they are paid for by a group. This is plain deception. Moreover, questions such as the above, to borrow a survey phrase, "beg for answers" and even confidence especially among the less informed.

* * *

Because one of the brothers have started to investigate certain [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

How to ensure a Congress that truly cares for people

THE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS have the notion that each of them is entitled to a pork barrel allocation that they can disperse as "development projects" for their constituencies. He puts, as such. They have conveniently forgotten that they were elected to make laws, not to appropriate for themselves public money to spend as they will. This year, they even had the temerity to double their pork—to nine, of course, for the midterm elections.

In the past, having direct "contact" with their respective pork allocations, they could practically distribute them. Now they have their pork allocations in the different budgets of line departments, but still they personally choose the projects on which to spend them.

Pork is the strongest attraction to run for Congress because that is what watches lawmakers. Almost all, if not all, of them are non-performers. Senior administrators in their own right, they submit multi-million-peso laundry lists to the pork barrel fiesta at Congress with the collusion from Pagcor, PCSO and other income-generating agencies, and to spend these funds pursuant to their whims for the purpose for narrow-developed communities and the depressed areas, and to improve the vivaciousness of those especially involved in bringing the government closer to the people, such as the unemployed political stalwart, cronies, civil service workers, policemen and soldiers and others from whom we usually requested personal sacrifices between and duty.

I think without pork, the members of Congress will become lawyer-legislators and casting servants of the people.

—BAL DIN SORIANO
E. ORTIZ Intl.,
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DUCAT yields to a candidate he later criticized

Action-drama-comedy quickie revealed a lot

IN FILIPINIANA, A QUICKIE IS a low budget movie with a virtually unknown cast, a fitness plot and a lousy script.

As it turned out, the homage-making of Grande made a true-to-mouth, big box office action-drama-comedy quickie written, produced, directed and starred in by one Jun Dura, with a supporting cast of a handful of unmemorable actors and a bunch of extras—the police, family people and the unemployed "salaryo."

The plot was fairly simple. A disgruntled, possibly mentally disturbed "champion of the poor" loses all hope in government and decides to take it upon himself to initiate drastic vigilante against corruption and other harmonious maladies. To those public servants and employees he considers corrupt or jumping on "whimsical little trip" and then takes them captive when their cost has reached a meaningfully selected spot, and shows different but privileged treatment to each of them.

Self-righteous, lovable, loving, lively, hands-in-the-air, approachable but no-nonsense style. Comedic frills—officers flashing handwritten messages on cardboards or the homage-makers inside the bus, brash cropping actions. Dumb bloopers with gratuitous hands, limbs, privacy parts flaunting the gut bash into one. Drama-minded. Gentle lighting rise to mush and of the whole saga.

His spontaneous cast drama a lot of favorites from the movies. First, the Philippine National Police and other law enforcement agencies have shown one more time how inept they are in handling emergency like this. (Remember the rock-throwing incident at the Pagtug EDC early this month?) Why did they allow a civilian, a criminal at that, to approach and board the bus to negotiate and become an easy target or captive hostage? Nevertheless, the police are ill-equipped. They were using bullhorns and other communication equipments; why were they too using them to communicate with the hostage-taker? Doesn't it have to be done technology-savvy. We had a speakable wireless public address system on hand through which to send his gripes.

Third. Were the police on help loan to—and the incident that they allowed Bicar a dramatic catch-22 trap? Isn't? Or were they simply exercising maximum restraint?

Fourth, a politician is the most cunning animal alive. What with Singson's perfect timing to leave the scene. He should henceforth be called "turtle" Singson. Chiefly a "hapag-ibaba" speech for hanging on for a few extra [ ] to such a free ride on risk "homage stake" to the word his announced out, and the media fell for his ploy, scrambling to find out where he was trying to run him. How baby must have laughed at himself.

On a serious note, Dura and his "mate" must not be rewarded with bit glories. The incident must not be used by them as a springboard to get to the land of (mis)understood. And the police must be more vigilant. There might have inspired other criminal or semi-terrorist minds to follow this Grande's footsteps and turn them in the face of police helpless.

—JOEL VALENCIA,
joe_valencia@yahoo.com.ph

GMA devoid of sense of history

THE PRESIDENT USED IN THE very recent election year is clever and honest decision. With the alleged villain in the slaughter of the 2004 elections still very much in control of the electoral machinery, the electoral turn-every means to be contested.

Not known for forthrightness and honesty (in elections), this is Macapagal-Arroyo at the biggest threat in the coming elections. It may only be medieval public relations and promo that such initiative as the fire in the Comelec building (which destroyed documents vital to the conduct of last, not a fact) and the appointment (by means) by unidentified individuals into sensitive areas of the agency priming the ballots (so says ballot secret numbers, apparently in preparation for electoral fraud) can be explained.

Kit all the administration's efforts to push Cibilis Team Unity into line is of minor concern to her GMA will not really mind if the Genuine Opposition makes a decent sweep of the line. 14 elections. Her biggest concern is to keep the opposition from electing 60 congressmen, the number that could cut the impeachment process in motion. To prevent such an eventuality, the bill measures of government are being harnessed.

The election of at least 60 opposition candidates is giving GMA nightmares. The midway's lives, and campaign against party-list groups and the like, and senatorial candidates personalities reveal GMA's real fears. An impeachment trial will be a head-swirling rapid twist for her. She may be able to deal with a hostile impeachment court by stripping legal technicalities or by packing seats to enter Supreme Court justices with prospective administration appointments, but she cannot afford the taking up of the impeachment complaint by the whole world, it will be a catastrophic blow.

There is only one thing that can deter GMA from her excesses—that is, the unerring judgment of history. But she is scared more of her underlings in the Comelec, in the justice departments and in almost the entire bureaucracy, and the arrogance and hubris of her generals, to care that, blinded by the desperate need for political survival, GMA may now be devoid of sense of history.

—EDGARDO P. BAGASAO JR.,
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When motorcades become a joke

A MOTORCADE FOR CESAR AZIS has been an ongoing joke around the city's environmental community for decades. Malaki yourselfly made a similar joke last April 16, with a one-minute "engine shut-off."

The serious question is how the environmental awareness raised among people who see the latest caste wrangle against the unconstitutional corruption and other harmonious maladies. To those public servants and employees he considers corrupt or jumping on "whimsical little trip" and then takes them captive when their cost has reached a meaningfully selected spot, and shows different but privileged treatment to each of them.

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—JOEL VALENCIA,
joe_valencia@yahoo.com.ph

Why is columnist De Quiros still in the Philippines?

I WAS SURPRISED THAT INQUIRER columnist Conrado de Quiros had to enumerate the 15 signs showing the Filipinos as an "outcursed people." (Inquirer, 4/11/07)

If he is so pissed off with being a Filipino, may I ask why he is still in the Philippines? Doesn't he understand that even kids now read newspapers?

My own kids do, and his parents must have unfortunate ass Filipinos are could bring to navigate their way in the world. Why is he still in the Philippines? Doesn't he understand that even kids now read newspapers?

My own kids do, and his parents must have unfortunate ass Filipinos are could bring to navigate

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Education must encourage religious tolerance

THIS IS A REMINDER TO GEORGE Montiago's lower about teaching Islam in public schools. (Inquirer, 3/26/07) While the Constitution clearly defines the separation of Church and State, it does not mean that state-run schools should refrain from bringing up issues of religion. Organized faiths, like Christianity and Islam, are very influential facets of society; thus it is important that we are able to freely talk about them in schools, especially with the pervasiveness of violence. There would be a violation of the Church-State separation provision if, for example, a school forces students to subscribe to a religion, or teaches religious bias.

It must be noted that in Metro Manila, Muslims are overwhelmingly the minority, and they definitely feel religion is just one of the issues that Muslims face. Consider Judeo-Christian values. Consider Judeo-Christian values. Consider Judeo-Christian values

INQUIRER Southern Luzon
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A DRAWING by typhoon survivor Raquel Abramo. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Typhoon survivors heal through art

By Fabian Ingersol and Joanna Lee Baños
Inquirer Iloilo

A NEWLY BUILT HOUSE, RADIANT WITH flowers ablooms all around it, capped Raquel Abramo's series of 12 oil-based pastel sketches that depicted her ordeal after Supertyphoon "Reming" fell her place in Ashby.

"How could we have peace if we don't touch our rebuild again?" she said. "It's the first time that marked the beginning of pain," said Abramo, 33, a teacher of Mandarin, and Physical Education (Pilipe) at the San Lorenzo Ruiz Social High School in Jaro City.

She produced a sketchbook as a way to heal from her traumatic experience after fleeing to safety.

Abramo was with her 71-year-old father when tragedy struck. Her father died crushed inside their house in Talisay as the height of the raging storm.

To save themselves, she had moved a grillwork in the kitchen to create an opening and broke her body.

In interest when the storm had calmed down, Abramo noticed the side cabinet her house used to stand. Almost all her personal belongings, appliances and other furnishings were destroyed, leaving the other debris strewn around.

The same struck her like lightning—all she had left were her family and caring neighbors.

This insight sold the lightning in her memories symbolic of the tendencies in her visual narrative titled "Burning Remains" that is presently in her display.

Dreamworks

Months later, at the Ruiz Lord Christ home an extensive suite in Barangay Buhangin in Davao. After, viewers would join other survivors in an art workshop facilitated by the Bread of Comfort for Survivors Inc. (Bocs), a group that draws on art's capacity for healing and self-actualization.

In the workshop, Arthes guided participants through an art form called kinetosculpture, which is quite like a shaped tapestry that uses children's crayons gathers as textile prints with images of their stories.

The images are first drawn by the artist using bond paper and colored pens to be transferred later into a textile-based artwork.

The craft is a representation of the artist's desires—the kind which he frame in his conscious mind or a mental reflection of what he aspires for himself, and what he wishes for his family, and closed to the art form during a seminar in Baguio City facilitated by Arthes' vice-chair Alma Quinto in April 2006.

At the workshop, Hare would direct

Across the NATION

Relief disaster looms large in Sulu

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THEY NEED FOOD, medicines, blankets, tents and even vitamins.

But Sitti Hassan Imam, social welfare secretary for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said the evacuees in Sulu, now at least 10,000 families, are not getting enough of those items.

"There are more volunteers to distribute relief goods, but the problem is there's little to give," Imam told the Inquirer yesterday.

"Majority of the people sleep on cold concrete floor and they crisscross underneath makeshift tents made of tarpaulin. Aside from being cold, worse, they are all suffering from food shortage," she said.

Imam relied on "people with kind hearts to donate cots, blankets, and clothes, mosquito nets, medicines and more food" for the evacuees.

Only 2,500 families received relief goods since they fled the fighting on April 11.

The evacuees receive 5 kg of rice, canned fish and noodles, barely enough to feed 2 kids.

Epidemic

Imam said if the fighting continues, "we will be facing an epidemic because of the poor situation in the evacuation centers, there are no toilets or enough portable water for the evacuees."

As of yesterday, she said, truckers from the Department of Health's have reported that the evacuation area will be guarded well.

But with the limited medical supply, "we anticipate problems with health, especially those of the children," Imam said.

Gov. Luis Angel Parojinog Jr., assistant secretary of Sulu's provincial government, said he has appealed for the deployment of more soldiers to guard the evacuation centers, including the Sulu Capitol Gymnasium, Jolo Bus Center.

On Sunday, Marines overran Maimbung town, the hometown of Abu Sayyaf leader Radullan Sahiron.

Lt. Col. Romeo Brawner Jr., commander of the Joint Task Force Comet, said the military had pounded Maimbung with artillery fire and aerial bombardment before the ground assault.

Brawner said the military had also destroyed the Abu Sayyaf's training camp in Maimbung.

Brig. Gen. Alexander Yano, commander of the 2nd Marine Brigade, said Maimbung was the last Abu Sayyaf stronghold in Sulu.

Yano said the military was now hunting down the remaining Abu Sayyaf members in the province.

Some evacuees are suffering from cough, colds, bone-bound pneumonia and fever.

Some barangay health workers also reported the evacuation centers, providing immunization to children and infants including anti-polio vaccines.

"Everyday the number of evacuees swell," Imam said.

Number swelling

The Red Cross record on Tuesday showed there were at least 8,700 families displaced. "How it's now is less than that," Imam said.

Imam said candidates for nursing were hard to find because most of the graduates wanted to work in the evacuation.

But in Sulu's civil and social work accidents of the needs of the evacuees, the military continues waging war against the group of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) commander Ferrer Ibnida.

Clashes and fighting continued in Patikul town where an army soldier's have been killed since Tuesday morning.

But the Tabsoran, Silubukaan Command said eight Sulu soldiers have been killed since fighting started on April 11.

Col. Ernesto Abaya, commander of the 2nd Marine Brigade, said Ibnida's group suffered 20 casualties.

"The military had the permission of the Moro Conference evacuation, intended to resettle.

Malik led the infantry at Malik Mudar base in Buansa town on Friday in retaliation for a military attack on his stronghold. Hamid Aldihan, chair of the Lupon ng Bayan Revolutionary Command, Sweden earlier.

On Sunday, Marines overran Maimbung town, the hometown of Abu Sayyaf leader Radullan Sahiron.

Malik Abdul Jain Ali, chair of the Bangsamoro Congress and spiritual adviser of Nur Misuari, said the military had provoked Malik.

Ali said two MNLF fighters were killed while another was wounded in Barangay Buansa in Indanan when troops of the 104th Army Brigade attacked an MILF camp where Abu Sayyaf leader Radullan Sahiron was reportedly hiding. Julie S. Alipala with the report from Edwin O. Arevalo, Inquirer Mindanao

ABUNDANT STONE
Vendors sell necklaces with gemstones made of calcite, one of the most common minerals on earth whose crystals take thousands of varying shapes. The souvenir items sold for P50-P100 each on Boracay Island, known for its white sand beaches.

Palace calls top-level meeting on SCTEx

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE CEO of the government-flagship project Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway, whose construction has been delayed by 2,190 days as of March, is due to meet in a high-level conference in Malacañang on Friday, the chief of the Subic Urban Bullion's report emphasized.

Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who also chief of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Development Council, said in an Presidential Management Staff Secretary Cerge Remonde have asked the officials of the Bases Conversion Development Authority, the managers of the two Japanese contractors and the foreign consultants of the project to attend the meeting.

Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan was also asked to join in the session and give advice.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is not pleading over the meeting but she wanted updates on how the P21.6-billion, 94-km. four-lane toll highway was actually proceeding.

Ms Arroyo has declared that the SCTEx a priority project because it will serve as a link between the Subic Bay Freeport in Bataan and Dadalupao and the Clark Freeport in Pampanga and Tarlac, to be able to transform those two former United States military bases into dynamic hubs of economic activity.

The SCTEx is one of 25 infrastructure projects in the Labor-Diskarte Reform.

Funded on a loan from the Japanese government, the road is being built by Sojitz-Obayashi-JFE Engineering-Hanshin Heavy Industries (SOH) Joint Venture and the Mitsui-Toyo-Nippon Steel (MTS) Joint Venture Construction begun in April 2005.

However, BOM and PPP failure filed separate notices of deadline extensions on April 5 and March 28, respectively, due mainly to problems related to right-of-way as the right to access to lands on which the road is being built, according to documents obtained by the Inquirer.

The road's ROW is the Philippine government's counterpart in the project. The BOM, as project proponent, is spending some P800 million to buy more than 2,200 lots in the various locations of Central Luzon.

BOM acquired financing at least 2,404 days of delay on the 84-km. Bataan-Pampanga portion. The delay in RTB on the 44-km. Pampanga-Tarlac segment reached a total of 457 days.

The deficit caused the possibility that the road projects could not be finished by Nov. 17, the deadline set by Malacañang.

Documents said the morning was called because the Palace was getting concerned over conflicting reports from the agency (BCDA) and principal contractor (sic).

"Pwde get these all and assist in said conference and find out if after SCDA is saying is true, we want to also know if the traffic asphalt of the contractor is doable," Presidential aide sa Bases informers.

BCDA president Narciso Abaya declined to speak with and text messages from the Inquirer on Wednesday. Tomorrow Empire, Inquirer Central Luzon

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Case on shaved barangay funds sent to Manila

By David Isaac Siray
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE CITY PROSECUTOR'S Office recommended that the two graft complaints filed against the officers of the Lapuz ng mga Barangay sa Filipinas be endorsed to the Office of the Chief Prosecutor for its action.

In a 10-page complaint dated Dec. 13, 2006, Leonora Castellano, barangay captain of Ortiz, Iloilo City, lodged a complaint for malversation of public funds, misappropriation of funds and violation of the anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, against Lapuz ng mga Barangay sa Filipinas officials.

The respondents include Lapuz ng mga Barangay national president Joann Bhady Lim and other national officers for withholding P744 from the Local Government Service Equalization Fund (LGSEF), fund allocation of each barangay.

Barangay Kua Pedro Chan Jongkhan that no also illegal to sanction over against the same respondents.

In a resolution dated April 16, 2007, prosecutor Jimmiah Bugcaina Guerrero recommended that the case be forwarded to Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito R. Zuño.

Guerrero made the recommendation due to the "magnitude" of the case, which affects all barangays nationwide.

"It is respectfully recommended that these cases be forwarded to the office of the chief prosecutor for appropriate action," Guerrero said in her resolution noted by Assistant City Prosecutor Jocelyn Bawani and approved by City Prosecutor Elmer Baldoza.

The complaint was earlier assigned to Prosecutors Peter Ralmo and Gaspin Elmo but both inhibited themselves from conducting the preliminary investigation on the complaint.

The Department of Budget and Management released only P18,000, instead of the P10,744,000 allocation, per barangay.

P50M used to buy cell phones, TVs, computers

From page A1

were declared SARS-free.

Third, as the House investigation later found, possibly the use of the money with marginal exception, and in some cases, just outright fraudulent.

Legislators who investigated how the P50 million from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) was used for an anti-SARS program found what some of them described as alarming evidence of misuse of the money.

The group that got the money was the Lapu-Lapu Barangays, a national organization of village chiefs and officials headed by Senator Mercy Lim, chair of a village in a Mandaluyong town.

The program to prevent the spread of SARS started with Executive Order No. 201 issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo on March 31, 2003 [sic], 2004. The Lapu town topped to help out.

P1B for entire program

Ms Arroyo ordered P1 billion in funding for the entire program, which included what were then unofficial reports of the SARS outbreak in the health department, but Ms Arroyo wanted grass roots participation.

Six days after she issued EO 201, Ms Arroyo was guest of honor at an event in Malacañang convention at the Palace basic hotel including, Cebu City where she asked barangay officials to help in the war on SARS.

Presidential election

It was at that gathering, held a little more than a year before the run in the 2004 presidential election, where Ms Arroyo also promised cash barangay P500,000 for the anti-SARS program.

But the Lapu and the Department of Health were slow to respond to the President's promise, or to the need to fight SARS.

In February 2004, about three months before Ms Arroyo ran for a regular six-year presidential term in 2004 and the Lapu to send into a memorandum of agreement that opened the vault.

Legislators who took part in the House investigation questioned the timing of the signing of the PCSO-Lapu agreement and the subsequent release of the P50 million (the same year for a single reason—the Philippines was officially declared SARS-free in 2004).

Lim, according to transcripts of the House investigation, said the Lapu purchased the items in the year that SARS was officially declared to be no longer a threat because the group's project proposals were not processed by the PCSO.

But he said his group proceeded with the purchase of the items because the project proposals that the Lapu had submitted "were real. by for a prosecutor and/or the entire time, advocacy program."

No coordination with DOH

Legislators would later find out that there was no coordination made by the Lapu with the DOH on what kind of projects should be funded out of the P50 million.

The oversight subcommittee of the House committee on health conducted an investigation in 2006, or two years after the P50 million was spent, and found the following:

- The purposes for which the money was spent was listed as three general categories—information, education and communications campaign, P35 million; early detection, surveillance and quarantine, P5 million; and emergency response, P10 million.
- Lumped under information, educational and communications campaign were purchases of, among other things, water purifier, DVD players, flat screen TVs, laptops, digital cameras, more than 700 units of Nokia cellular phones, projectors, national typewriters, fax machines and payment for the registration of a Mandaluyong Dubsa team.
- Limited under early detection were money given to Lapu chapters in Isabela Barkarao, P50,000; Nueva Ecija, P50,000; Kalinga, P48,000; Abra, P46,000; Ilocos Norte, P45,000; Ilocos Sur, P45,000; Bulacan, P45,000; and Baguio City, P23,000.

Agusan del Sur, P52,000; Surigao del Sur, P52,000; Las Piñas, P5,000; Cebu City, P50,000; Valenzuela, P46,000; Caloocan, P40,000; Lucena del Sur, P50,000; another story for Agusan del Sur, P7,000; Malabon, P3,000; Manila, P49,000; Caloocan Sur Norte, P46,000; Mangaldan, P45,000; Cagayan, P74,000; Pampanga, P45,000; Bohol, P5,000; Iloilo, Bonifacio, P40,000; Bacolod, P40,000; Iloilo City, P40,000; Muntinlupa, P40,000; and Rizal province, P44,000.

Two fatalities

The Lapu couldn't explain why only P95,000 was given to Pampanga's flood-reliefs this only free Filipino fatalities of SARS, Isleta Jose Isabel Mauricio Catalan, Isabel.

(The global death toll from the SARS outbreak in 2002-2003 was almost 800. The Philippines reported 14 SARS cases, including two deaths. All four were returned Seafarer from a Filipino worker who contracted the virus in Toronto and returned his father after receiving home.)

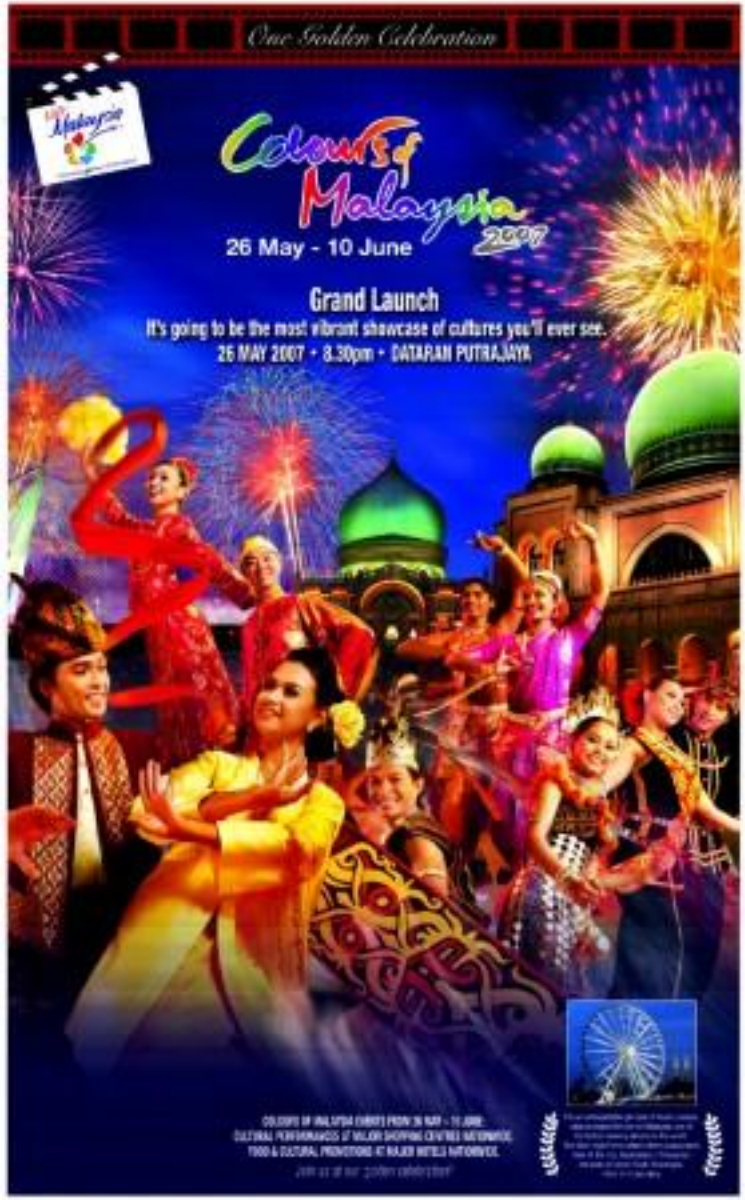
Also, the investigators found, there were two hotel rooms in Lapu chapters in Bocos Norte and Leyte, where two suspected cases of SARS never monitored in 2003.

There were no receipts from the villages or village officials who received the money.

- Under emergency response, investments showed that the P15 million was spent for, among other things, water purifier, DVD players, flat screen TVs, laptops, digital cameras, more than 700 units of Nokia cellular phones, projectors, national typewriters, fax machines and payment for the registration of a Mandaluyong Dubsa team.
- Limited under early detection were money given to Lapu chapters in Isabela Barkarao, P50,000; Nueva Ecija, P50,000; Kalinga, P48,000; Abra, P46,000; Ilocos Norte, P45,000; Ilocos Sur, P45,000; Bulacan, P45,000;

Late SPORTS

Bulls whip Dragons; TNT gains



By Marong R. Castillo

THERE WERE NO ANXIOUS moments for Red Bull as far as its game with Welcoat went last night, other than the cheap shot taken by James Penny with the game practically decided.

Red Bull broke many sight from the get-go and dealt Welcoat a sound beating, 109-71, which was one of the unanswerable Dragons we read that young Jayvee Reyes rugged Bulls on hand in the third quarter and put the league's PBA Power Cup title in peril.

Penny had combined with Jeremy Villanueva for 25 points in the first half as the Bulls zoomed away for good by taking commanding leads on the way to regaining sole leadership in the elimination round of the Asiania Conference with its 8-1 card.

And just when it seemed that the game was over except for the final score with Red Bull ahead, 61-36, Penny interrupted a pass to Reyes and tried to go coast-to-coast only to be boomeranged on the back of the head and fell hard on the floor.

"We fan some swelling [on the left eyelid] and we will have it checked tomorrow [today] to determine the extent of damage," intensive coach Leo Austria said.

Penny, more interested after scoring 14 points and grabbing nine rebounds in 22 minutes. Villanueva went on to lead all Red Bull shooters with 19, while Larry Rosanes and Rocky Ulli-Linsaco added 13 and 10, respectively.

The Dragons fell to 2-7, tied for last spot with Sta. Lucia.

Playing with a sense of urgency against a team that seemingly lacks motivation, Talk 'N Text needed just one quarter to take the fight out of Sta. Lucia and register a 99-64 victory in the first game.

More stories on A21 to 24

Jose Alfaro led 12 of his 22 points in the first period to crank up the Talk 'N Text offense as the Phone Pals snapped a two-game skid to improve to 4-5 overall, which coach Derrick Pumaren said was where he wanted his charges to be.

"We [gained] a sense of urgency," Pumaren said. "We really needed to win this and to win in the middle of the pack because we are still looking at making the quarterfinals tonight at the very least.

While the Phone Pals doubled to a share of fifth spot with idle Coca-Cola, the Tigers took a second straight loss Both on the slide, dropping to 3-6 overall just ahead of the cellar.

Mark Cardona scored 15 points in the final two periods to finish with 24 and Alvin scoring honors for Talk 'N Text, which hit 55% in every at 39 points, 70-of-, with 5-12 3pt in the third period.

Meanwhile, Coca-Cola has parted ways with Anthony Johnson and will be bringing in Jeff Varner, a National Basketball Association veteran who had a short stint with the Chicago Bulls last year.

Listed as 6-foot-6 and weighing 240 pounds, Varner, a native of Bayou Magnolia who saw college action for Washington State, will be reunited for the height limit at the PBA affiliate ranks.

The Tigers have really boosted their stock before the Holy Week, when they snagged Alex Cabagnot, Rikky Cabanag and former DYP forward Dyonisio from Sta. Lucia in a lopsided trade. Coca-Cola has gone 3-1 since that trade and is at 4-5 overall.

maxis

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New raps vs police officer

Abduction suspect accused of arbitrary detention

By Kristine L. Alave

SUPT. RODRIGO D. BONDOCIO, A POLICE official who has been accused of kidnapping a leftist police officer, was charged earlier this week with arbitrary detention for allegedly obstructing the son of one of the witnesses against him.

In a complaint filed in the Pasig City Regional Trial Court last Monday, Kristian Henares, 20, said Bondocio was the mastermind behind his abduction from April 12 to 14.

Bondocio immediately posted bail of P6,000 for the new charges against him.

Henares said he was taken from his house in Ilaya, Mlang by an unidentified man and woman on April 12.

According to Henares, his captors first asked him what his name was. They then told him to come with them as the lives of his mother, Anita, and sister, Kerry, were "in danger."

Anita and Kerry are witnesses in the kidnapping case filed against Bondocio, the former administrative officer of the Traffic Management Group of the Philippine National Police.

Bondocio is accused of kidnapping Chief Insp. Rodel Pobe, former chief of the Quezon City police Special Weapons and Tactics team, last Feb. 1.

According to Anita and Kerry, Bondocio, along with other men, beat up and then kidnapped Pobe from the house of Genevieve Wenceslao, reportedly a former beauty queen, in Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

Pobe has not been seen since. Bondocio, on the other hand, even was hailing but finally gave himself up to his superior, TMG director Chief Supt. Isreal Ilan, on April 2. He denied having a hand in Pobe's disappearance.

"I am completely innocent of the charges against me and have no hand in the disappearance of Major Pobe," Bondocio told reporters when this prompted him to media on April 12.

According to Henares's complaint, a dark green van took him to Manila on April 12. From there, he was taken to an office in Makati City. There, he met a woman named Wenga and a man who called himself Ed. Dionisio, who later turned out to be Bondocio. Henares said they told him his mother and sister were involved in a case with a police officer.

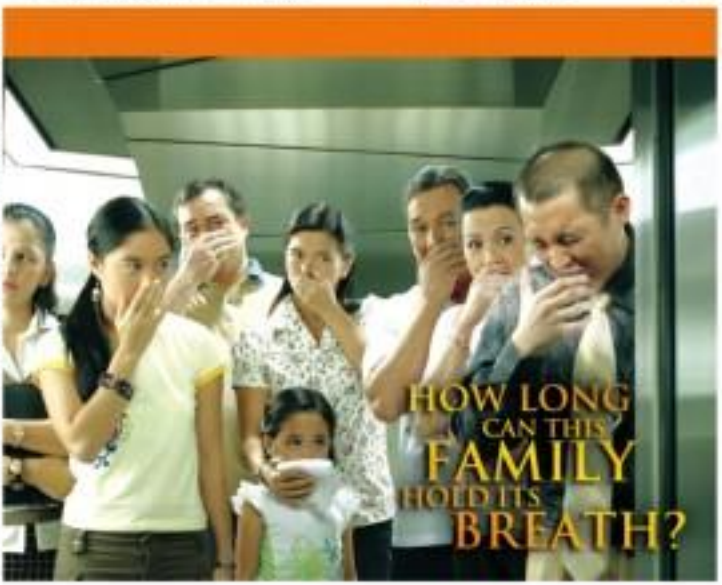
The next day, Henares said he was transferred to Room 2106 of the Richmonde Hotel in Pasig City where he met Bondocio again.

According to him, Bondocio let him talk to his mother on April 14. They agreed that Bondocio and Anita would meet at the basement of the hotel that afternoon.

By that time, however, Anita had asked the police for help. When agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group asked the management of the hotel who was staying in Room 2106, they were told that it was vacant.

The agents, however, checked the room, accompanied by the hotel manager. Inside, they saw Henares and Bondocio, whom they immediately arrested.

SENIOR Supt. Rodrigo Bondocio (right), who is in the custody of his superior, TMG director Uriel Ilan (left), for the disappearance of Chief Insp. Rodel Pobe (inset), has been accused of kidnapping the son of one of the witnesses against him. KISS BRIONES



'De las Alas killing not premeditated'

By DJ Yap and Kimberly Tan

THE LEAD INVESTIGATOR IN THE MURDER case filed against former Batangas Gov. Jose Antonio Leviste yesterday told a Makati court that he believed the killing of Rafael de las Alas, the suspect's longtime aide, was neither treacherous nor premeditated.

But PSSI Herman Pasadang, of the Makati Police criminal investigation division, also admitted he was "in a hurry" when he filed homicide instead of murder charges against Leviste. Dr. De Alas was shot dead by Leviste on Jan. 12 at the 5/F Tower in Makati City. In addition, he admitted that he filed the charges without looking at the results of the autopsy and ballistic test.

Pasadang testified yesterday before Judge Elmo Alameda of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 who wants to determine if the prosecution had strong evidence against Leviste to justify the denial of his petition for bail.

Under cross-examination by Manuel Singson, Leviste's lawyer, Pasadang said he was not able to talk to any witness who could state that the crime may have been a murder.

Pasadang said his recommendation, later supported by the inquest prosecutor, Henry Delmar, was to file homicide charges against Leviste. Under the law, murder is committed with treachery, premeditation or planning, or taliwanan exactly.

Defense lawyers described Pasadang's statement as a blow to the prosecution. But government prosecutors insisted they were able to establish how the recommendation for the filing of homicide charges had been done without all the facts in hand.

Leviste, who gave himself up to the police hours after the shooting, has said he shot De las Alas in self-defense. He was initially charged with homicide but this was later upgraded to murder.

INFLUENZA. A SINGLE SNEEZE TRAVELING AT A SPEED OF 600 MILES PER HOUR MAY CARRY ABOUT 100,000 INFLUENZA VIRUS CELLS. THESE STUBBORN CELLS CAN STAY ALIVE IN A ROOM FOR AT LEAST 30 MINUTES. EVENTUALLY, THEY COULD ENTER YOUR BODY THROUGH YOUR MOUTH, EYES OR NOSE.

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ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR VACCINATION NEEDS TODAY.

BUONG PAMILYA MAGPABAKUNA

2 car theft suspects alleged kidnap victims

By Jeannette I. Andrade and Alexis Pupa

A WOMAN WHO IDENTIFIED herself as the live-in partner of one of the five suspected car thieves killed in a shootout Monday with agents of the NCRC Management Group said yesterday that her husband had disappeared 5 days before the alleged encounter.

Maureen de Leon, 23, who said the cars the partner of bicycle driver Rodel Marquez Aquino, 31, said she became in a phone interview that Rodel was among seven or eight thieves in Silverstream, Bulacan who were rounded up by a tip-top of arms on Friday evening.

Her statements were similar to those made by Jocelyn, wife of Michael Rivera Lampa.

Another told reporters on Tuesday that her husband, who like Aquino was also a bicycle driver, disappeared three days before the supposed encounter.

Aquino and Lampa were among the five men killed in the shootout with NCRC agents in Fairview, Quezon City.

Three groups of people were picked up in Meycauayan last Friday. I was worried that he was among those who were taken that's why he suddenly disappeared," De Leon told the Inquirer in Filipino.

"Rodel was a hard man. He was not a criminal," she stressed.

One of the five suspected car thieves was identified as Melanio Tolentin.

According to the police, Tolentin, also Dido, was the leader of a criminal gang in Bulacan, whose members used to belong to the notorious Sangre Group.

TMG spokesperson, Supt Elvin Patrocinio, said the group is involved in robbery, extortion, New Theft, kidnapping and gun-for-hire activities in Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga and Cavite.

'Not robust'

To dispel rumors that the five were killed in a robust, Patrocinio said PNP Senior Building of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group presented three alleged rotten of Tolentin's gang.

Alfredo Tagle of Baliuag, Bulacan; Rodolfo Quirante of Meycauayan, Bulacan and Alfredo Pascasio of Norzagaray, Bulacan positively identified Tolentin and his men as the ones who stole their motorcycle last year in Bulacan.

With Angelo Rebanta

BIKERS FOR ENVIRONMENT
Over 2,000 cyclists joined the 'No Toxic' of the FreeRex last Sunday to promote biking as a bio-friendly, nonpolluting, environmentally-sound and alternative means of transport. The activity is an annual event involving bikers of all ages who ride a 50-kilometer race through the major streets of the cities of Pasig, Taguig, Makati, Pasay, Manila and Quezon and San Juan cities.

Robbery angle eyed in Chinoy trader's slay

By Tina G. Santos and Cynthia S. Ayoso

AUTHORITIES ARE LOOKING at robbery as the possible motive in the killing of a 65-year-old Chinese-Filipino businessman early yesterday morning in Manila.

Silverstone Mobil, who owned a buy and sell business, was shot dead and lying in a pool of blood inside his room at the Tai Tee Building on E. Madrid Street in Binondo at around 7:30 a.m.

He had several wounds in the head which could have been made by a hard object, the police said.

Mobil's room was in total disarray while some of his cash and valuables were missing, they added.

Chief Insp. Alejandro Yangalit, Jr., head of the Binondo Police Station for homicide division, said they are now looking for two men who could be involved in the incident.

According to him, one of the two suspects is the boyfriend of the victim's housemaid, Edelyn Bendaluan.

Bendaluan, who has been taken into custody by the police, claimed she was the one who first found the victim dead.

She said that she immediately informed the victim's wife, Sulu, about the discovery.

Bragging said they have strong evidence showing that Bendaluan conspired with the suspects in robbing her employer.

"Bendaluan's duty was immediately informed the victim's wife, Sulu, about the discovery.

Bragging said they have strong evidence showing that Bendaluan conspired with the suspects in robbing her employer.

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Bragging said they have strong evidence showing that Bendaluan conspired with the suspects in robbing her employer.

"She [Bendaluan] only have allowed the two men to enter the victim's house," he said. "The victim could have been roused from sleep, prompting the suspects, who were armed with an ice pick, to beat him up so he would not be able to make noise," the police official added.

2 Manila cops face charges for extortion

By Tina G. Santos

AN OFFICIAL OF THE MANILA Police District and a subordinate were removed from their posts yesterday for allegedly extorting money from four Chinese nationals.

Ordered relieved were Senior Insp. Eduardo Reyes, deputy chief of the MPD General Assignment Section, and PO3 Jedi Ira Ca, who assigned to the section.

They were transferred to the Headquarters Support Unit of the police force.

Reyes was replaced by Insp. Agripino Salazar.

MPD acting director, Senior Supt. Danilo Abarrosa, said he ordered their relief after four Chinese nationals accused Reyes and police of extorting P250,000 from them.

Detained

According to the Chinese, they were arrested and detained at the Western Police District on allegations that they figured in a brawl inside a bar in Manila last month.

They were then approached by Reyes and Ira who allegedly asked them for P150,000 in exchange for their release.

Supt. Edwardo Otinez, chief of the MPD District Investigation and Detection Management Division which conducted a probe of the case, said extortion and administrative charges will be filed against the two policemen.

DID YOU KNOW

METRO Manila's agency charged to protect 10,000 to 15,000 MBtu/d accounted for 32 percent of the country's GDP. Total gas from PNOC's GDP comes to the natural gas and services provided locally.

Cyril C. Bautista's Inquirer research

Manila's mayoral bet out 'to slay dragons'

By Allison W. Lopez

RE-ELECTED PLANS TO MAKE A film about his life, under his tagline "I'm not a politician but a statesman," a title to assess allusion in the media.

And now the lawyer wants to do Manila mayor, too.

Salvacion Ester Belej may already have a lot on his hands but that does not keep him from dreaming of leading the country's capital.

Despite having won by a land poor four years, he has remained politically undaunted. But Belej says this is the first time he is actually serious about his candidacy.

"Before, I just ran to become known and to get some clients," he said in Filipino.

Belej, who has been elected twice in his city in 1994 by Batangas (till date) in 1998, he thinked some other, by 2005, by congressman of the city's sixth district and in 2004, he thinks a councilor.

He lost in all his attempts, but this did not discourage him. Instead, he has set his sights that time on the city's highest post.

Belej was the first to file his certificate of candidacy for mayor at the local Commission on Elections office on Jan. 19.

He told the Inquirer that he composed his own campaign jingle. He showed his campaign T-shirts, pamphlets, posters and streamers now featuring his self-proclaimed title "Dragon Lady".

He explained, "I am the Dragon Lady because everybody has a hard dragon in the heart."

Through most of Belej's campaign from on remembrance, particularly of "the Manila City Hall, Hall of Justice and the Islamic Center, his heart is still the youth, whom he promised to help develop through sports. According to him, seasoned youth only need attention and proper guidance.

His wife, Elizabeth, was not as certain when she first learned he wanted to run for Manila mayor. "I knew his intentions are serious, but you know our politics here—the 'tiso' must have a win," she said.

But nothing can stop Belej from trying his luck even if winning the race is like reaching for the moon. "I was often asked when I wanted to do when I was young," he said. "I wished to be president of the Philippines."

But now, he has set his sights on the City of Manila.

METRO BRIEFS

Bus passengers robbed

FOUR armed men robbed passengers of a bus traveling on a highway near the boundary of Montalupa City and San Pedro, Laguna yesterday. The thieves later got off the bus in Biñan City, Police said. All eight passengers and the bus driver, Alejandro Dela Cruz, said the men divested them of their cash and other valuables of 15 passengers on board a bus that San Pedro-bound bus at about 4:30 a.m. Dela Cruz reported that the robbers announced a holdup as the bus was cruising on Sumulong Highway in Barangay Cuta. Police said the robbers apparently had no idea that the Evangelista-led investigation fled the suspects to the Commission on Elections (Comelec) gun ban, which started on the previous day. They said the suspects were fired at the bus' earlier, adding that after taking their loot, the bus alighted near the Biñan Integrated Terminal at 4:30 a.m. This bus

(CJ Yap)

Call for help

ANONYMOUS Datu Z. Arak Tolentino, the celebrated son of Philippine Military Academy Class 2000 who has been diagnosed with thin cancer, is now undergoing chemotherapy and intramuscular at the Philippine General Hospital. Those who would like to help him may call Cadet 4P2007-07-1-3886 or his girlfriend Ellen Jane Francisco at 09 17-8232460. Inquiries can also be routed through Tolentin's account at his Livelihood of the Philippines branch account number 0477-1-0270-0.

Symposium on VFA, Subic rape set April 23

A SYMPOSIUM on the Subic rape case and the Visiting Forces Agreement titled, "Exposing Russian Policy on Violence Against Women," will be held on April 23 at the University of the Philippines' College of Social Work and Community Development in Diliman, Quezon City, organized by the Women's Legal Bureau, in partnership with Task Force Subic Rape and the Center for Women's Empowerment and Development. The symposium will be held at the Balintawak Session Hall at the Balintawak Building, Diliman from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Lawyer Evalyn Ursua will moderate the session speakers.

FOSTER MANIA
Wife's less than a month away from national and local elections, campaigners and posters of candidates hang like litmus hanging from posts and telephone wires along San Andres Street in Manila.

Ex-Capt. Rey Jaylo's conviction unjust

ON TARGET
Ramona Jaylo

A SENIOR OFFICIAL AT THE Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is reportedly dusting off old files to find the government's regional and district offices to solicit "donations" from subordinates.

But my source at the DPWH say most regional directors and district engineers refuse to fork over their hard-earned cash to the administration's campaign fund. Some would be moved to accept the donation of his time as he is not to retire soon, or help the official get reappointed to a post concerned by at the Supreme Court.

A district engineer said at Monday's flag-raising ceremony, practice for retiring DPWH officials to adopt "send-off money" the official concerned didn't subscribe goodwill among his subordinates.

When he was still in power, my source said, this official would have subordinates and friends solicit funds to sponsor his office, even when he wasn't doing anything, before they were allowed to see him.

It was probably his way of making himself feel important, the source said.

And now the tables are turned against this DPWH official.

Because who enjoy power now should take to heart a sage advice: Treat the small people on your way up because these are the same people you meet on your way down.

* * *

A common justice at the Court of Appeals shouldn't have been appointed in the position because many nonetheless allege that the actions of the Supreme Court justices who are members of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) are influenced by politics.

Justice Ramona Jaylo was assigned by then Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban to serve as a spy from the Office of Court Administrator (OCA) to monitor the activities of the Supreme Court justices.

Jaylo was assigned by then Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban to serve as a spy from the OCA

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Guess

Gangster guns down Nagasaki mayor

AN IRANIAN Mosaic: 12-ground-to-air missile is displayed during the Army Day military parade outside the mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic republic, Ayatollah Khomeini (poster), in Tehran on April 18. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vowed that Iran's military would cut off the hand of any enemy that launched an attack. AFP

TOKYO—WHEN NAGASAKI'S MAYOR WAS fatally shot in southern Japan, it wasn't much of a surprise that a gangster was arrested for the attack. In a country where regular citizens face strict gun laws, the mob does most of the shooting.

In the 61 years since Nagasaki was leveled by the first atomic bomb dropped in war, only a handful of people have been killed by guns in Japan, and most of those were victims of gangland violence.

Iccho Itoh, 61, was shot twice in the back on Tuesday evening and died early Wednesday. Tetsuya Hirano, a senior member of Japan's largest crime syndicate, the Yamaguchi-gumi, was captured at the scene and admitted to the attack, police said.

"This murder, which took place in the middle of an election campaign, is a threat to democracy," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said early Wednesday. "We must eradicate violence firmly."

The killing—reportedly linked to Hirano's demands for city compensation for car damage caused by landfills—focused attention on the role of the Japanese mafia, or "yakuza," in the rare shootings here.

Of the 13 gun attacks reported in 2006, two citizens died—one a businessman and the other a member of a construction group, the National Police Agency says.

Handguns are strictly banned for ordinary citizens in Japan, and only police officers and others—such as security guards—with job-related reasons can own them. Hunting rifles are also strictly licensed and regulated.

Other syndicates, however, have the money, manpower and international connections that enable them to smuggle foreign guns into Japan.

"The danger of Nagasaki was killed by a gun that was illegally possessed," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki said. "The fact that criminal organizations have studied every point through smuggling and illicit sales ... is also serious."

The attack came despite a sharp drop in shootings in recent years.

The number of reported gun attacks have plunged from 116 in 2003—with 70 percent blamed on yakuza—to 32 last year. The number of illegal guns seized by police dropped by nearly 40 percent from 2002 to 2006, when 910 firearms were confiscated.

Even gangsters are careful when it comes to opening fire, preferring to use swords or fists—tactics known as "sudden attacks" that give victims little chance to fight back, police and lawyers sometimes say.

Still, public concern about gangsters' activities has risen in recent years. Japan's two largest underworld gangs earlier this year thanked a practicing lull in gang violence. AP

Israel secret service foils Iran spy plot

JERUSALEM—ISRAELI SECURITY officials said they have broken up an Iranian plot to recruit diplomats as spies, deepening hostilities between the Middle East nations.

The spat has thrown light on a strange anomaly: While Iran's president calls for Israel's destruction as he pushes forward with a nuclear program, Israeli Jews are still allowed to visit relatives in Iran.

According to Israeli security officials, that has begun tempting Iranian Jews who want to visit Iran on personal spies. Israeli security officials said reporters Tuesday that agents from the Shin Bet security service detained an Israeli returning from a visit to relatives in Iran.

The man told interrogators that he was paid by Iranian intelligence operatives and asked to help them spy on Israel.

Shin Bet briefing documents distributed by the Associated Press did not specify when the man was picked up, if he carried out the assignment or if he was released after questioning. The Israeli man reportedly was detained two years ago.

The documents said, however, that this was only one among several alleged incidents.

"Over the past year Iranian intelligence has increased its activity against Israel," they said. "The Shin Bet has recently uncovered a number of attempts by Iranian intelligence to recruit Jews, Israeli citizens of Iranian descent, who went on Israeli visits to Iran."

There was no comment from the Iranian government.

About 125,000 Israeli Jews trace their roots to Iran, according to Israeli Interior Ministry records. Since the two countries severed close, according to Israeli army Radio, about 100 Israelis have visited family members there over the past two years.

The Israeli

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WHAT'S INSIDE

- Warriors, Clippers heat up playoff race

SPORTS

Editor: Rodolfo S. Mañalac

- Federer struggles past foe /A24

'Gregorio a cinch to bag executive director post'

By Mayong B. Castillo

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S JOB IN the Samahang Basketbol Pilipinas (SBP) MAP is a foregone conclusion in favor of Patrick Gregorio, a very reliable source told the Inquirer last night.

Gregorio, a 39-year-old executive in a chain of hotels in the south, will get the nod of the board members in this coming Quezon City dinner affairs, including a number who earlier lamented the handling of Association of the Philippines (MAP).

Jun-Jun Cojuangco, the athletic director of Ateneo, Jay Isidro of the MAAUL) and that MAP personality are the others being considered, but the source said that Gregorio has the "only chance in bagging the job" because he enjoys an edge no one else in the roster of candidates has.

"Under the Sangkok convention, the SBP) position must go to someone who is a seasoned personality, one who has an all-Olympian or all," the source, who spoke on condition that he is not identified, said.

"All the others have their links to different leagues and only Gregorio has none that's why he will win it [job]," the source, who is privy with the deliberations of the SBP's inner circle, added.

The keynote broke the news on Gregorio last Monday with SBP chief Manny Pangilinan having talked to the heads of Purefoods head coach Ryan for the job.

There are other names being floated for the position, one which would have also considered the late Emilio F. Bernardino, the longest-serving PBA commissioner who died recently because of a third heart attack.

Under the constitution of the SBP-MAP, the candidates will be scrutinized by the 21-man board which Pangilinan heads, before deciding on who will occupy one of the most sensitive positions in the organization.

The Executive Director's position is a hands-on job that would require utmost commitment," the source said. "That's why it is imperative that we can have someone who will dedicate his time to the organization."

Gregorio, better known as the eldest brother of Purefoods mentor Ryan Gregorio and ABC assistant coach Allan Gregorio, had earlier said that he is not worried guessing the SBP board post yet.

"That's no appointment yet. I was just nominated as a candidate for executive director," said the founding chair of the Cebu Workers and Construction Bureau and former president of the Waterfront Hotels.

Just like his siblings, Gregorio played in the UAAP juniors for the University of the Philippines Integrated School.

He later went for the UP Maroons back in the '80s while taking up BS Tourism Management but wasn't included in the final roster when the last two slots were filled up by point guards Bonnie Wagamon and Eric Altamirano.

Handwriting and nominations committee chair Ely Capacio was tasked to close up a list of candidates for the post which the San Miguel Corp. executive would forward to the executive board.

The board, led by Pangilinan, would then deliberate on who should take the job of running the daily affairs of the fledgling group.

Since the task is a full-time job, Pangilinan and the board would hire the candidate with sound credentials who could effect much of his wish for the post.

Pangilinan made an emergency appearance at the Philippine Basketball League opening Monday joining the stars that honored the Rainbow Center squad that won the Southeast Asian Basketball Association Double Champions Cup in Pangalinan's "special-event." With a report from Anne Navarro

Trainer: No more fooling around in next big fight

By Ray Lucero

LOS ANGELES—MANNY PACQUIAO should be in training as the Wild Card Gym here might wonder before his next big fight, anything less.

This was the consensual advice by Australian trainer Justin Fortune after watching the Filipino ring icon dismantle Mexican challenger Jorge Solis in the eighth round to retain his WBC International super featherweight crown at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas, on Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

Having worked with Pacquiao since 2005, Fortune knows what the acknowledged world's best pound-for-pound fighter is capable of doing.

The former heavyweight boxer is all too familiar with Pacquiao's punishing power, his blistering speed and his big fighting heart.

Many of the more than 14,000 fans who watched the blow of blow fight could were impressed that night, but not Fortune and associate Trainer of the Year Freddie Roach, who flew in from Puerto Rico hours before the fight just to be in the Filipino's corner.

To their discerning eyes, Pacquiao was far from his best. On a scale of 1-10, Roach graded Pacquiao's performance a 6.5, while Fortune gave the Filipino ring icon by no less an unimpressed.

While Fortune acknowledged that Filipino trainer Rabiey Hernandez and Nonoy Neri did a good job supervising Pacquiao's training back home in Sofi, Lumbia City he insists nothing beats close, hands-on preparation at Wild Card.

"So, next [fight] we [will] bring around [Pacquiao's] trainer [Hernandez] or [Jesse Marcel] Marquez," said Fortune, noting that Pacquiao for the most part "was playing around" against Solis.

Though Pacquiao had stopped former three-time champion Erik Morales in their first meeting in 2005 and had knocked down Marquez twice in the first round in their showdown in 2004, Fortune believes the two remained Mexican fighters are capable of toppling an off-form Pacquiao.

Against Solis, Pacquiao spent less than two months of training and just three weeks at Wild Card, which the Filipino visited after Team Pacquiao received [illegible] before flying to Hawaii for Roache's meeting.

Meanwhile, Roach denied that he and long-time training assistant Fortune have parted ways, allegedly due to the fact that the check Pacquiao raised as payment for training services was in Fortune's name.

Roach, who's in Puerto Rico supervising Oscar De La Hoya's training for his [illegible] bout against World Boxing Council Jr. welter, told Brad Cooney of Fightnews.com that they have an agreement regarding the payment.

MANNY Pacquiao should start preparing for his next fight, says his trainer.

Miller cited for Aces' rise

IN HIS COLORFUL CAMPUS, WILLIE Miller has already left little doubt about his playing abilities.

So when he still manages to add another unit to his game, it only makes him more lethal, and Alaska more formidable in the ongoing Talk 'N Text PBA Phone Cup.

"He's not only playing. He's playing with power, intelligence and playing all facets of the game, including defense," said Aces coach Tim Cone of Miller, who was adjudged as the PBA Press Corps' Accel/TNT Player of the Week for the period April 9-15.

It was the fourth such citation in the season and second in the conference for the 5-foot-11 guard, who earned the nod due to his impressive numbers in Alaska's two wins for the week.

Miller had 21 points, seven rebounds, three assists, a steal and a block in Alaska's 109-86 win over his [illegible] Sunday.

That performance came on the heels of another equally exciting show of [illegible] when the Aces posted three aces in a 94-84 win over [illegible] last Wednesday.

Those wins enabled the Aces to improve their win-loss record to 7-2 and de-throning champion Red Bull and Batangas Coastlines for the lead.

But the 28-year-old Olympian native said Alaska's import had a part in his grabbing the spotlight. "Sullinger (Jerry Sullinger) also got [illegible] so the [opposing] teams concentrate [illegible] so that's why I was able to do [illegible] and that frees me up and the offense," quipped the 2006 Most Valuable Player.

The win over Sta. Lucia also [illegible] Cone's child as coach of the South All-Stars team.

Rivera to play in tenpin Masters

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DIDOY RIVERA, THE REIGNING bowling world masters champion, left for England last night to compete in the prestigious World Tenpin Masters, a tournament featuring the top 16 bowlers in the world based on their performances last year.

"I'm very excited but very nervous," said the 33-year-old Rivera before he left, adding that he lacked preparation in terms of oversight exposure.

The event, to be held on Saturday [illegible] England, states men's and women's bowlers. The defending champion is American Chris Barnes.

Rivera is one of the five Asian bowling artists in the event which will also include three-time champ Eric Jorgensen of Norway, 2005 titlist Jens Haberer of Germany and the Filipino's Shiki rival Henry Ong of Singapore.

With the Asian Games debacle still behind him and a knee injury fully healed, Rivera is confident he can measure up to the sport's big guns.

"If they can do it, I can also do it," said Rivera, who dubbed out a perfect game to nail the 2006 world masters championship in Korea last year.

Rivera is also set to look home with the heavyweights the following month in the World Bowling Masters in Lakeshore, Florida.

Armed consultant who is also in the bowling business, Rivera was saddled by a knee injury late in 2005 while preparing for the SEA Games. He didn't have enough time to fully recover because he had to train for the Doha Asiad, but he added that his knee is in better condition now.

Harbour tackles Burger King

AFTER bringing home the bacon in an international meet, Harbour Centre, which represented the country in the Champion's Cup, will try to win big on the local front.

SPORTSWATCH

Shakey's girls volley tilt kicks off

Heritage Cup: Last elimination round up

LPC Fastest Win today

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Orduna captures second Shell title

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Still just one slot for RP gymnastics

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINES IS HOPING TO SEND AT least 30 gymnasts to the December Southeast Asian Games. But so far, only one has the requisite ticket to Thailand.

Only Rod Ramirez, double gold winner in the 2005 SEAG, managed to make the criteria set by the SEAG Task Force made up of officials of the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission.

National head coach Annay Ty, however, said the rest can still make the cut either through the Asian championships in Kobe or in the national ranking next month.

"There is still a chance for them to make it," Ty told the Inquirer. "We have the Asian championships and the national ranking which will be decided by the international judges."

The national rankings, according to him, will now employ the new international code of points which no longer restrict the judges from giving a perfect 10 points.

He didn't say whether the new point system could help the Filipinos make it to the SEAG but Ty said it could provide inspiration for the local gymnasts.

Just the same, the Philippines is still looking for the inclusion of the women's artistic events floor, vault, beam and dance subjects in the National SEAG.

Ty said the country is joined by Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Singapore in contesting the SEAG equivalent of the Big Four team championships instead of the women's events.

He said the Philippines has a big chance for the gold in the women's vault.

Fernandez trips Antonio, ties for third

EMERYVILLE, California—IM Vin Cenon Jr. (2,4) def. Ronald Dableo (2,4); Jayson Gonzales (2,4) def. Jan Emmanuel Garcia (2,4); Jan Christian Chua (2,4) def. Jan Emmanuel Gonzales (2,4); Jan Emmanuel Gonzales (2,4) def. Jan Christian Chua

SPORTS

Warriors, Clippers heat up playoff race

Cavs have No. 2 seed in sight

PHOENIX—[illegible] Los Angeles Clippers had to beat the best of the Phoenix Suns, if not the Suns at their best, to keep their playoff hopes alive with one game to go.

Chris Bosh scored 25 points to lead the Clippers to double figures and Los Angeles beat the Suns, 103-99, on Tuesday night.

Jamie Hart made two free throws with 7.8 seconds left to seal the win and deprive the Suns of a 62nd victory, which would have tied the franchise record.

Los Angeles needs to win Wednesday at home against New Orleans and have Golden State lose at Portland to get the No. 8 seed in the West and a first-round playoff date with Dallas.

While Dallas, with the No. 1 playoff seed locked up, rested its stars in a game at Golden State on Tuesday night, Suns coach Mike D'Antoni stuck with his regular rotation, despite being assured the playoffs No. 2 slot.

Still, the Clippers pulled away to win in the fourth period.

In Oakland, California, Thiago were pretty much easier for the Golden State Warriors.

Michael Finley scored 21 points, Matt Barnes had 19 and Golden State ripped a "resting" Dallas squad, 111-82. Dallas is down to the brink of its first postseason berth since 1994.

The Warriors took a 16-point lead in the first half but they needed to beat fifth straight win over the Mavericks, marring the three-game season series from the NBA's best team, which also is their potential first-round playoff opponent.

Dallas kept Dirk Nowitzki, Josh Howard, Jerry Stackhouse and Erick Dampier out of a meaningless game...in preparation for the postseason.

Golden State has won eight of the last nine games.

In Philadelphia, Larry Hughes scored 22 points and LeBron James had 19 to lead Cleveland's 98-93 victory over the Sixers, keeping the Cavaliers alive for the second seed in the Eastern Conference.

The Cavaliers could move up to No. 2 if they beat Milwaukee on Wednesday night and New Jersey beats Chicago, also on Wednesday. If they play like this against the Bucks, they'll surely be counting on the Nets to win and keep them up in the playoff race.

Jones added six assists to an all-around solid game and led a well-balanced Cavaliers attack that had six players in double figures.

In Washington, the Orlando Magic overcame Antawn Jamison's 40 points and kept up a last-minute push to improve their playoff seeding with a 99-89 triumph over the Wizards.

Hedo Turkoglu scored 26 points to lead the Magic, who are sitting in eighth place in the Eastern Conference, but could move as high as seventh if they beat Miami on Wednesday, the last day of the regular season.

If they do move up, it will be largely at the expense of the Wizards, who have lost eight of nine and are straight at home—most of them without their two injured All-Stars, Gilbert Arenas and Caron Butler. Jamison tried to carry his team with a season-high performance, but he got scant help from his teammates.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Richard Hamilton scored 24 and had 10 points in a glorified exhibition game for Detroit and Toronto, one which saw the Pistons whip the Raptors, 106-84.

Neither team had anything to play for—the Pistons are locked into the last two Conference's top seed and the Raptors will be No. 8—but Detroit coach Flip Saunders didn't waste a repeat of his team's feeble loss to Philadelphia.

So, while Toronto's Chris Bosh and Anthony Parker spent the night in street clothes, Detroit played its normal rotation until the game got out of hand.

In Atlanta, the Hawks set season highs for points in a quarter and a half as they finished another disappointing season by beating the Indiana Pacers, 138-102.

THE GOLDEN State Warriors' Monta Ellis (No. 8) goes up for a basket against the right defense of the Dallas Mavericks' Devin Harris. AP

Veteran ref gets Stern suspension

NEW YORK—NBA referee Joey Crawford was suspended indefinitely by commissioner David Stern on Tuesday for his conduct toward Tim Duncan, who confronted the official challenged him to a fight.

Crawford, suspended as a top referee, ejected Duncan from a game in Dallas on Sunday. He called it a second technical on the San Antonio Spurs star while he was on the bench.

"He looked at me and said, 'Do you want to fight? Do you want to fight?'" Duncan said. "If he wants to fight, we can fight. I don't have any problems with him, but we can do it if he wants to. I have no reason why in the middle of a game he would yell at me, 'Do you want to fight?'"

Crawford's suspension will last at least through the NBA finals. His opponents will have to meet with Stern after that to discuss reinstatement.

Tony Crawford's handling of this situation failed to meet the standards of professionalism and game management we expect of NBA officials," Stern said in a statement. "Especially in light of similar prior acts by the official, a significant suspension is appropriate."

Although Joey is extremely rated as one of our top referees, he must be held accountable for his actions on the floor, and we will have further discussions with him following the season to be sure he understands his responsibilities."

The point are three-rated likely refers to the 2005 Western Conference finals, a matchup involving the same teams as in Sunday's game. Crawford called four technical fouls in the first two-plus minutes, leading to ejections of then-Dallas coach Don Nelson and assistant Del Harris.

Crawford also called a technical in a recent game against Duncan, who said on Sunday that Crawford has a "personal vendetta against me."

Duncan was called for his first technical foul Sunday with 2:20 to remaining in the third quarter for arguing about an offensive foul Crawford for him, with the second technical 1:26 later after Duncan was on the bench laughing about a call that went against the Spurs.

Speaking to a pool reporter before Duncan spoke, Crawford was asked about Duncan thinking he had done nothing to warrant the ejection.

"That's for sure," said Crawford, adding that Duncan referred to him with an expletive. "Is that nothing?" AP

HEAVY PREPARATION

Undefeated welterweight Floyd Mayweather Jr. works on his mitt-handling during a workout session for his fight against Oscar De La Hoya in Las Vegas on May 5. REUTERS

Archers, Eagles lead list of Invitational Cup field

TWO STORIED COLLEGIATE RIVALRIES—between against De La Salle vs. the UAAP and San Beda against Letran in the NCAA—will be showcased in the opening matches of the Filoil Flying V Pre-Season International Cup on April 25 at the new San Juan Arena in San Juan.

After serving a one-year suspension, the La Salle Archers of Coach Franz Pumaren will meet their arch-rivals the Eagles at 4 p.m. in the main contest of the tournament serving as advanced preview of this year's fight for supremacy in both college leagues.

The first game at 2 p.m. pits the NCAA defending champion Red Lions, starring big man and shot block artist Sam Ekwe and power forward Yusef Al Amad, against the Knights, who boast of an inner source.

National University will battle Jose Rizal University in the co-feature night cap.

The Archers, who won the Filoil Flying V Championship Invitational Cup last year over the JRU Heavy Bombers, are tipped to win anew behind outbursty Rico Maierhofer, Chris Villanueva, TY Tang, and JV Casio.

Monsalves rule jungolf tilt

ABILMAJI NICO, MARNI AND JOHAN MONSALVE turned the Camp John Hay leg of the 2007 Jungolf Summer Circuit into a family affair recently when they pulled off contrasting victories in Baguio City.

Nico topped boys' Class A by two strokes, Marni prevailed in girls' Class B by seven shots and Johan roared the field in boys' Class E.

However, victories punctuated the competitions in the other divisions with MP Ramos reporting the biggest winning margin in the event sponsored by Philippine Airlines, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Callaway, INC., Tune Zone, Supreme Golf, Federation of Golf Clubs and Dela Rie Trophy. Camp John Hay provided special prizes to the participants.

Rob Kenny Pino claimed the boys' Class C trophy by nine, Louise Manuel captured girls' Class D by 14 strokes while Philip Mesoy won boys' Class F by 23. Kim Silvestre ran the field in girls' Class E.

The battle for the top two divisions among the boys went down the wire, however, as Nico held off Ramon Aabao, (103-107) and Ross dela Peña turned back Bjorn Fang (119-121).

The jungolfers will take a week off before competing in the eliminations by the Callaway Junior World Championships where tickets to Los Angeles donated by Philippine Airlines for Division champions will be disputed.

For inquiries, please call 405-1000 and look for Chanel or e-mail jungolf-97@pldtdsl.net.

Federer struggles past foe

MONTE CARLO, MONACO—ROGER FEDERER labored to beat Andreas Seppi, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5), Tuesday in the second round of the Monte Carlo Masters.

The 10-time Grand Slam champion made several unforced errors, particularly on his backhand, before winning on his third match point when the Italian qualifier sent a forehand into the net.

"It was rough. Conditions were quick. A lot of bad bounces," Federer said. "I'm already 'lucky' three matches in by logs and it was my first. I'm happy to leave some through."

Federer looked shaky in spells, and in the fifth game of the first set hit five unforced errors off his backhand.

"It happens, and I have to put it down my first match on clay in 18 months," the top-ranked Swiss star said.

Federer will next play Lu Yen-hsun, who upset 10th-seeded Mikhail Youzhny of Russia, 6-4, 6-3.

Two-time Grand Slam champion Marat Safin ousted four match points before losing to Nikolai Davydenko, 8-6, 7-5 (8), 6-4.

"When you lose after having a match like that" Safin said.

Fifth-seeded Belgian David Nalbandian defeated Radek Stepanek, 6-4, 6-4.

Also in the second round, lucky loser Guillermo Garcia Lopez of Spain beat Marc Gicquel of France, 6-4, 1-6, 6-3. AP

ROGER Federer smashes a serve to Andreas Seppi.

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Neda OKs ₱47.9-B Laiban Dam project

Long-term water supply for Metro Manila

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC and Development Authority Board chaired by President Macapagal-Arroyo approved the other day the Laiban Dam project in Tanay, Rizal.

Formerly called the Manila Water Supply Project III, the ₱47.91-billion project aims to provide long-term water supply—about 1,000 million liters a day (MLD) or 23 cubic meters a second of water—for Metro Manila. It also intends to address the existing 1,120 MLD of water supply gap in the metropolis.

Financing for the project is expected to come from the Chinese government and a funding agreement has been scheduled for signing during Mr. Arroyo's visit to China next week.

Aside from water supply, the Neda Board said that the project has a power component, which will augment the power supply for the Luzon grid. The hydroelectric power plant is projected

►B6

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 47.61 = $ 1

As of 5:00 p.m., April 18, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See stock market report on Page B3)

Shares close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED DOWN AGAIN LAST week on investors' bank profits on the eve of a central bank policy meeting, dealers said.

They said some analysts expect the Bangko Sentralng Pilipinas to leave its key interest rates steady as concerns about rapid growth in money supply would likely overshadow benign inflation and a strong peso.

But they also see a possibility that the central bank would eventually adopt measures to siphon off excess liquidity by tightening money policy.

The composite index shed 22.88 points at 2,786.38. It moved between 2,818.80 and 2,818.17.

There were 74 losers and 30 gainers, while 54 stocks were unchanged. A total of 1,810 lots changed worth ₱75.06 million.

Dealers said investors also cashed in on some stocks to subscribe to the initial public offering of National Reinsurance Corp., the second IPO this year.

"Investors are cautious and staying on the sidelines ahead of the monetary board meeting. The stock [reasons] fell today but [Wednesday] supports the view that there might be some policy tightening soon," said Jonathan Ravelas of Macquarie Securities Philippines.

"Retail investors are afraid of cash for the IPO of National Reinsurance and most probably today," said Walter Aguilard of Maybank Securities.

National Reinsurance is offering up to 4,000 million shares at ₱5.50 each. The initial five-trading days is April 27. The company is a domestic reinsurance firm that provides life and nonlife reinsurance and is eyeing expansion into regional markets. /AFP

Sumitomo eyes $1-B nickel project in Surigao

By Bonnel W. Domingo

TRADE SECRETARY PETER B. FAVILA YESterday hailed Sumitomo Metal Mining Co. Ltd.'s plan to put up a nickel-smelting project in Mindanao worth at least $1 billion, saying projects like that were "very welcome as long as they comply with our various laws."

In an announcement dated March 29, Tokyo-based Sumitomo said it had teamed up with the Japanese group's Taganito Mining Corp. (TMC) on a joint feasibility study covering an area in Taganito town of Surigao del Sur.

Sumitomo said the project was planned as a large-scale smelting facility that would use high-pressure acid leaching or HPAL, "a technology that is garnering world attention."

The company said that if results of the study proved favorable, Sumitomo and TMC would form a joint venture firm in 2008 and build an HPAL plant on property adjacent to the Taganito mine.

"Plans call for the production of 30,000 tons (in equivalent metal nickel) of nickel-cobalt mixed sulfide yearly with the raw material to consist primarily of low-grade nickel oxide ore produced at the Taganito mine," Sumitomo said.

The HPAL plant is expected to start operations in 2013 and continue for about 30 years.

Sumitomo explained that HPAL technology enables the recovery of nickel and cobalt from low-grade nickel oxide ores.

"Before HPAL was developed, recovery of valuable metals from such ore had been difficult," the firm said.

Sumitomo describes itself as "a global leader in this ecc-friendly based on the company's success in the Coral Bay nickel project" in Palawan where some 30,000 tons of nickel are produced yearly.

The Japanese firm is pouring in some $300 million to expand its Coral Bay facilities and double output by 2009.

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Philamlife assets up 24.5% to ₱164.9B in '06

Insurance giant's premiums also hit record high of P14.5B

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE PHILIPPINE AMERICAN LIFE and General Insurance Company (Philamlife), reported that its premium fund has a record P14.5 billion in 2006, a 15 percent increase from the previous year.

The term premium refers to the amount of money required for coverage under a term insurance policy for a given period of time. Depending on the policy, the premiums may be paid annually, quarterly, semiannually or annually.

According to Philamlife, which is a member of global insurance giant American International Group (AIG), new business premiums also grew 41.2 percent to P4.7 billion.

"Our excellent new business growth was driven by the remarkable sales performance of variable life products and a stronger contribution from the agency," said Jose L. Cuisia, AIG country head and concurrent president of Philamlife. "Variable life has been an investment success and reflects the public's growing desire for diversified investment orders that offer potentially higher returns."

Cuisia said Philamlife has new solutions to provide clients high net worth and Chinese-Filipino markets, most of whom prefered investment oriented products.

Philamlife also noted increase in its assets, net profits from

NBN proponent braces for 'Naia 3, part 2'

To secure contract, Amsterdam opts to slug it out

By Rina T. Dishongdee

AMSTERDAM HOLDINGS INC. (AHI), the private firm that proposed to build a national broadband network for the government, is bracing for a legal battle to secure the project, the firm's legal advisers said separately.

Indeed, rebuffed AHI sees the NBN project going the way of Naia 3's long, drawn-out struggle, Atty. Adrian S. Foguy said. "We don't know, but we are preparing for all the legal options."

"As long as we are that we have the better proposal, we can't allow the process for pursuing the project," Foguy added.

AHI officials maintain that they were ahead of other firms in submitting a complete proposal.

"In fact we were unsolicited, we have complied with all the requirements," said Marinelle B. Ofiaman, Foguy's associate. "We were not informed that we in bad any requirements and [recently]."

Last week, a Cabinet-level committee approved the NBN project, citing the need for a national telecommunications backbone for the government's rising communications requirements.

Abner A. Mercado, assistant secretary for planning at the Department of Transportation and Communications, said the project would go to the Chinese proponent ZTE because AHI failed to submit a "complete proposal."

Asstsecretaries Planning Secretary Romulo L. Neri also cited the Chinese government loan proposed to fund the implementation of the country's telecommunications system.

Amoyo said this meant that the deal would go to ZTE, bypassing a formal bidding process, since it would be a government-to-government transaction.

The funding would come from a 15-year loan from a Chinese state-owned bank with a five-year grace period, Senate published.

The "government-to-government deal" was the same route Malacañang took for the North Rail project. The Chinese government also funded that project, which was implemented by a Chinese contractor.

AHI proposed to build the $329-mil. fiber network, with no cash outlay from the government.

Telecommunications firm Ramtel, the largest of its kind in China and a major player in the global IT industry, is one of AHI's technical partners.

"The government only has to pay for whatever service it uses, and at prices that are guaranteed. 25-percent less than industry rates," Ofiaman said. "The government can even transfer to another or privately [offering] more competitive rates for the same or better quality."

Also, with AHI as provider, it will take care of all maintenance and other network costs."

Meanwhile, ZTE's proposal comes with a $303-million price tag—$22.6-million more than Amsterdam Holdings' bid. The resulting network would be government-run.

AHI president Nathaniel Sison said the ZTE proposal could end up costing the government more. Up to $303-mil. more, or about 40 percent higher than the originally proposed price, given no interest costs.

Sugay said that if the DOTC was put its proposed rule for sale with that of the competing proposal and justify that the latter is better, then AHI would no longer protest its claim.

"All we want is transparency," he said.

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Analyst points out regulatory flaws, bats for creation of gov't superbody

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE PROPOSAL TO CONSOLIdate all the government's financial regulatory agencies—such as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Insurance Commission and the Securities and Exchange Commission—into one superbody has been reinforced by a study that intended weaknesses in the current regulatory system.

Mario D. Lamberte, author of the study, said it would be advisable for government to have just one regulatory body for the entire financial system, given the developments in the financial market, such as creation of hybrid products like bancassurance and unit investment funds (UITF).

Lamberte said having just one regulator would minimize the confusion as to which agency should be regulating the conduct of services and distribution of financial products that are hybrid in nature, as well as firms that perform various financial services.

"Hybrid" is a term used by financial practitioners to describe products that have combined features, say of an insurance and a banking instrument.

"We now have financial conglomerates (firms that perform) financial services functions like insurance and banking," Lamberte said in a panel discussion on the study held yesterday at the BSP.

He added it would be more prudent if one government body would get to supervise the financial firms, instead of having several regulatory agencies monitoring the companies.

Aside from the BSP, SEC and the IC, the study also proposed for the Cooperative Development Authority and the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. to be included in the regulatory superbody.

The study, which is initiated by the Ateneo de Manila University's Economic Policy Reform & Advocacy (EPAC), held 29 countries around the world have already adopted a single regulatory body for their respective financial systems.

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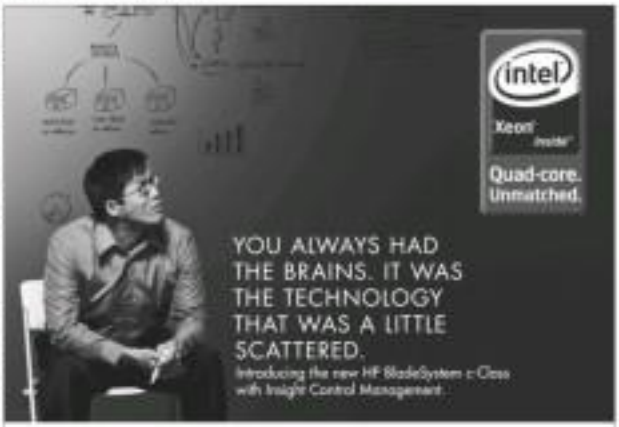

Neda OKs P47.9-B ...

From page B1

to produce about 25 megawatts (MW) of electricity.

For the Tumog hydroelectric power plant component, the Metro Basin and Sanitation Services Office (MBSO) has the option to consider financing from the private sector, including operation and maintenance through a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) or Build-Operate-Own (BOO) scheme.

The Tumog dam is also located in the Kabayo River in Tanay, Rizal, on the eastern and southwestern parts of the Sierra Madre.

The Laiban Dam project, an alternative to the Angat and the Ipo dams, is expected to operate in 2014.

MWSS provides water from the Ipo, Angat and Ipo river basins to Manila Water Co. and Maynilad Water Inc. for distribution from water concession areas.

Gross A. Acuna, assistant secretary for planning at the Department of Transportation and Communications, said the project would go to the Chinese proponent ZTE because AHI failed to submit a "complete proposal."

Asstsecretaries Planning Secretary Romulo L. Neri also cited the Chinese government loan proposed to fund the implementation of the country's telecommunications system.

Amoyo said this meant that the deal would go to ZTE, bypassing a formal bidding process, since it would be a government-to-government transaction.

The funding would come from a 15-year loan from a Chinese state-owned bank with a five-year grace period, Senate published.

The "government-to-government deal" was the same route Malacañang took for the North Rail project. The Chinese government also funded that project, which was implemented by a Chinese contractor.

AHI proposed to build the $329-mil. fiber network, with no cash outlay from the government.

Telecommunications firm Ramtel, the largest of its kind in China and a major player in the global IT industry, is one of AHI's technical partners.

"The government only has to pay for whatever service it uses, and at prices that are guaranteed. 25-percent less than industry rates," Ofiaman said. "The government can even transfer to another or privately [offering] more competitive rates for the same or better quality."

Also, with AHI as provider, it will take care of all maintenance and other network costs."

Meanwhile, ZTE's proposal comes with a $303-million price tag—$22.6-million more than Amsterdam Holdings' bid. The resulting network would be government-run.

AHI president Nathaniel Sison said the ZTE proposal could end up costing the government more. Up to $303-mil. more, or about 40 percent higher than the originally proposed price, given no interest costs.

Sugay said that if the DOTC was put its proposed rule for sale with that of the competing proposal and justify that the latter is better, then AHI would no longer protest its claim.

"All we want is transparency," he said.

RITWIG ng mga Henry Sy Sr. (kaliwa), chair of SM Development Corp., confers with son Henry Jr., vice chair of SMDC (standing), and Hans, who sits as SMDC director, during the stockholders' meeting of the property development firm at the Manila Peninsula in Makati City

SM property unit earmarks ₱7B for 3 new projects

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

SM DEVELOPMENT CORP., THE CONdominium developer of mall queen Hiyas Sy Ju, has earmarked about ₱7 billion for three major residential projects to be completed the next three years.

SMDC president Pegeldo Cabulong said the company's stockholders yesterday that the biggest of SMDC's three big ticket projects, which will be launched this year, was the ₱5.4-billion Shore Residences, a seven-tower condominium cluster on Mall of Asia that will offer 5,100 units mainly to mid-level professionals. The project will be started in the third quarter and targeted for completion by 2010.

Another ₱1.4 billion will be spent on Berkeley Residences, a 20-story condominium along Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City. Berkeley will offer 1,004 units and will start construction in the fourth quarter. Completion of the project is expected by 2009. Berkeley aims to cater to students, previously professionals and families with school children.

SMDC will also spend ₱261 million on Lindenwood Residences, a 22-hectare subdivision near Alabang with properties designed in the mold of American houses seen in popular American television series "Desperate Housewives." The lots will be marked by wide gardens while urban picket fences will provide privacy but not tight enough to lose a sense of community.

Lindenwood is a partnership with the Madrigal family, the landowner of the project. Lindenwood will offer 396 lots, which average 200 square meters each and are priced at ₱3.5 million to ₱7 million each.

Lindenwood will target starting families, couples and retirees. The subdivision will offer amenities such as a clubhouse with a 25-meter lap pool, kiddie pool, basketball court, playground and two function rooms. Scattered all over the subdivision are pocket parks. The project will be turned over by the first quarter of 2008.

The subdivision is also a five minute drive from SM Southmall and will be near a new SM mall rising in Muntinlupa by the first half of 2008.

SMDC chair Henry Sy Jr. said SMDC was likewise studying the possibility of putting up a middle-rise condominium on its 14-hectare property in Tagaytay to offer affordable and quality second homes.

BUSINESS

Plastics firms team up with DOST on recycling

By Rainier W. Dacinglag

THE PHILIPPINE PLASTIC IN-

dustry Association and a unit of the Department of Science and Technology yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding geared to step efforts to use trash for industrial projects.

PPIA groups 176 companies, most of which are engaged in converting plastic into various products.

PPIA president Huey C. Ng said the MOU provided that the group and DOST's Industrial Technology Development Institute would work together to develop new and improve existing technologies on plastic waste recycling and solid waste management.

Ng said among the possible projects were the use of plastic bags as additives for asphalt; biomass fuel made from the ball and cement binder with shredded plastic bags as a binder; and plastic waste to fuel/crude oil conversion labs.

She said the MOU demonstrates of the domestic plastic industry's commitment to support the implementation of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 by finding practical ways to recycle and reprocess post-consumer plastic waste.

"The plastics industry is faced with approaching threats that banning on growth and development," Ng said. "These threats come in the form of legislative proposals for a prescribed need to reduce consumption on the grounds that plastics are not environmentally friendly products or some environmentalists claim."

The PPIA chief said that by formalizing the cooperation with DOST-ITDI, industry players would be able to allay the fears of the environmentalists as well as meet their objectives of increasing the recovery and recycling of plastic wastes, promoting segregation at source and on site recycling, and converting plastic wastes into usable products.

Joint efforts between PPIA and ITDI started in 2005 when they explored the possibility of using plastic together for third practical ways of reprocessing plastic shopping bags and flexible laminates into useful products to address mounting issues on the effects of plastic film bags on the environment.

PPIA expressed its desire for the use of waste with the development of a locally fabricated plastic melting machine for foam using used cooking oil—a joint project between the IT-ITDI and the Polystyrene Packaging Council of the Philippines.

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RP's white potato exports surged 74% in '06

By Amy R. Roma

THE VOLUME OF THE COUNTRY'S WHITE potato exports surged 74 percent last year to 71.7 metric tons from 42.3 metric tons in 2005.

According to the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, 84 percent or 60.3 metric tons of the Philippines' $21.8,000 worth of potato exports consisted of ready-to-eat potatoes, such as crisps, chips and pellets.

Philippine white potatoes find their way to 27 countries, of which the United States and United Arab Emirates are the biggest markets.

The volume may be small but agriculture department officials remained optimistic, saying that the department sees a growing export market for Philippine potatoes in form of chips and strips.

White potato exports reached a high in 2004 when the country exported 364 metric tons.

The volume dropped dramatically when shipments of cooked/uncooked potatoes in water and frozen potatoes were suspended in 2005 and 2006.

Total local production of white potato for 2006 amounted to 88,461 metric tons, down by 6.6 percent from last year's production of 95,040 metric tons.

Sergio produced 65 percent of the volume. Other major potato producing provinces were Benguet, Ifugao, Mountain Province and Bukidnon.

In the second half of 2006, Benguet's production of white potato was affected by leaf blight disease, but it was controlled early.

Meanwhile, the country's total imports of white potato in 2006 likewise increased 17 percent to 62,109 metric tons, worth about $56.4 million. From the previous year's 58,903 metric tons.

Imported or processed potatoes accounted for over half of the total potato imports.

The United States remained the main supplier of imported potatoes.

Agriculture officials had explained that the Philippines continued as import white potatoes because local varieties could not be processed into snacks, especially the popular French fries.

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Global Culinary & Hospitality Academy

Business talks in Sultan Kudarat

MindanaoWorld

Jojit Bagaan-Biare

SULTAN KUDARAT WAS ONCE PART OF what used to be province of Cotabato. It was declared a separate province, along with Maguindanao and North Cotabato, on November 22, 1973 by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 341.

Tacurong City is the center of trade and commerce, public affairs in the capital town and government center.

It is a bustling province with a population of over 388,000, which is growing by 3.1 percent a year.

The province is strategically located in the BIMP-EAGA area and has direct access to and travels directly face maritime and the three major ASEAN growth partners (Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei), making it a potential backdoor trading post for the Philippines.

It has untapped deposits of copper, iron, oil, gold and other precious metals, and also has grassy deposits in the mountainous areas of Bagumbayan, Columbio, Sen. Ninoy Aquino, Kalamansig, Lebak and Esperanza.

Forests cover half of the province's total land area. Fifty-two species of commercial trees including G. mahiko, agatong, dao, guijo, kalantas, lawaan, molave, mangachapui, pukal and narra abound in different parts of the province.

There are sufficient water resources for irrigation, hydroelectric and inland fishing covering how 30 big rivers, 23 large creeks, 13 major springs and waterfalls, two lakes and several marshes.

Great potential

SK has the potential to produce all kinds of agricultural products, making it not only self-sufficient, but a leading producer and supplier of agricultural products in the region.

It is one of the major producers of rice and corn and a major source for palm oil.

The 864-MW Sibulan Complex is the largest grain complex in Southeast Asia. KIDS, NABI Phils., a palm oil processing extraction plant is one of the province's landmarks.

One indicator of business activity is the number of bank branches operating in an area, and I was surprised to know that Sultan Kudarat has 13 rural bank and 20 commercial bank branches.

Communication facilities are equally impressive with five telephone companies, four television broadcasters, 12 broadcasters, 11 satellite towers, four PM radio stations and one TV station.

Literacy rate is high at 90 percent, due to the presence of many colleges and private universities.

Construction on a commercial airport at President Quirino had begun, but work was temporarily stopped. A runway and terminal building worth P140 million are in place.

Launches and other motorized boats are used to ferry commuters and goods from the coastal towns of Lebak and Kalamansig to Cotabato City and vice versa, and from Palimbang to Glamba in South Cotabato.

A fast craft has recently started plying the route between Kalamansig and Cotabato City, which has shortened travel time between the two places from eight to three hours.

The province is now one of the most pro-

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KITCHEN RESCUE
Reggie Aspiras

Red-carpet treatment for Filipino dishes

I HAD THE CHANCE TO SIT down with yet another friend, Makati Shangri-La's executive chef Chris Rorstine, at the newly renovated Red. Over ribinole, adobo and glasses of Brendall Jackson, we discussed his vision for Red, his new avenue for play, discovery, invention and reinvention.

You might think it funny that in a place as opulent as Red we were having such simple pinkeyes. It is because Chris is on a mission to make Red a destination for those who seek in our Filipino food.

He narrated thirty-once very few occasions where people could bring their guests if they wanted to offer Philippine cuisine. After having been in the country for quite some time and having enjoyed our food, he sees no reason why it could not compete with the world's other cuisine.

Just opened Tuesday, the chef and his crew, consisting of Alexander Paul (executive sous chef), Rustiqui (sauc (chef de partie), and Yusof Sanes (executive pastry chef), are finalizing and polishing up their menu with the promise that, apart from old time favorites, there will be a cornucopia of new dishes, a hearty mix of the classics, fusion dishes and renditions of the best of "Tasti sneets Silva."

Cookie, biscuit, cracker

What makes a cookie different from a cracker and a biscuit. Do you have a short-bread recipe? I just love good old-fashioned shortbread!

BEATRICE

Beatrice, to be precise, here are the definitions for cookie, cracker and biscuit from the "Food Lover's Companion":

Cookie can be any of various handheld, flour-based sweet cakes—either crisp or soft. The word cookie comes from the Dutch koekje, meaning "little cake."

The earliest cookie-style cakes are thought to date back to 7th-century Persia, one of the first countries to cultivate sugar cane.

There are six basic cookie styles, any of which can range from tender crisp to soft. A drop cookie is made by dropping spoonfuls of dough onto a baking sheet. Bar cookies are created when a batter or soft dough is spreaded into a shallow pan, then baked, cooled and cut into bars.

Rated-formed (or molded) cookies are made by shaping dough by hand into small balls, logs, crescents and other shapes. Pressed cookies are formed by pressing dough through a cookie press (or pastry bag) to form fancy shapes and designs.

Refrigerator (or icebox) cookies are made by shaping the dough into a log, which is refrigerated until firm, then sliced and baked. Rolled cookies begin by using a rolling pin to roll the dough out flat. The dough is then cut into decorative shapes with cookie cutters or a pointed knife.

Other cookies, such as the German springerle, are formed by imprinting designs on the dough, either by rolling a special dowel-textured carved rolling pin over it or by pressing the dough into a carved cookie mold.

In England, cookies are called biscuits, in Spain they are galleta, Germans call them keks and in Italy they are biscotti.

Beatrice "refer to small quick breads" that often use ingredients like baking powder or baking soda. Biscuits are generally savory fine eyn be sweet, and the texture, cookie and light.

In the British Isles, biscuit usually refers to a flat, thin cookie or cracker.

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Cooking, baking classes in April

THE BIGGUE AMPIAN SCHOOL OF Culinary Art is offering the following classes:

April 23—Dit Beef Short Ribs Lelo nono)—Kalbi (Korean Barbecued Short Ribs) with Chapchae; Honey Adobo Ribs with Garlic Spinach and Garlic Adobo Rice; Roll-off-the-Spoon Twice-cooked and Smoked Ribs with Pork and Beans, Maple Corn on the Cob and Onion Rings; Bourguignonne-Style Ribs with Homemade Egg Noodles.

April 25—The Many Ways of Baked Macaroni and Spaghetti Lelo nono)—Macaroni with Bags and Mushroom Bechamel, Seafood with Dill Macaroni au Bechamel, Baked Spaghetti; Mixed Vegetable and Ground Beef with Cheddar Bechamel, Italian Sausage with Herbed Bechamel Sauce; My favorite Children's Party Macaroni and Spaghetti.

April 25—Chinese Iron-My Way 2: 87 (All new!)—Asian-style Baby Pork Ball Ginger Steamed Fish Soup; Carrot Noodles with Hunan-style Lamb Loin; Chinese Paella with Monk Fruit Chicken; Green Tea Cake.

April 26—Wardrobe, "The Rules of Pork"—Pork has never been this good!—Melt in your mouth Slow-roasted Garlic Rotisserie Pork Belly with Sauces; Rotisserie Pork-ben Grilled-style Roast Pork; The Best Tasting Roast Pickin Rib of Pork Ever, served with six sauces (apple, fruit chutneys, pineapple, salsa).

Call 9289296-or 9273868.

For the young

Maya Kitchen is offering summer classes in cooking, baking, barbecuing and others.

Teens age 13 and up can enroll in Young People's Cook 'n (YPC), 9 a.m.-1 p.m., April 24, 26, 28.

Japanese Cooking," will be offered 9-1:30, 1 p.m., April 25.

The Cake Class, Coffee 101, will be conducted 2-4 p.m., April 13.

Standard baking techniques will be taught in "Fundamentals of Bakery Production," 2-6 p.m., April 24-27.

Participants will get free baking cookbook including workshop exercise for commercial scale production.

Mega Pinoy Streetcore will be held 2-6 p.m., April 28.

Barbending will be held 2-6 p.m., April 28. It covers Basic Tools, Classifications of Wire and Sports, among others.

Basic Culinary, 9 a.m., 2 p.m., May 2-5, provides essential lessons in proper hygiene, sanitation and safety. Enrollees get a free "Mix and Match" cookbook.

Maya Kitchen is at A/F. Liberty Bldg., A. Arnaiz Ave. (formerly Pasay Road). Makati. Call 8921100 or 8924111 local 128. E-mail mkitchen@kmme.edu.com.ph.

Wine appreciation course

The Center for Culinary Arts, Manila (CCA) is conducting an interactive and hands-on Wine-Appreciation Course on April 20, at the CI Events Place in Greenhills.

The half-day course to be handled by wine connoisseur Sherwin Lao, is a new addition to the curriculum at CCA.

It will be held every month thereafter.

Lao co-owns Golden Wines, Inc., exclusive distributor of Casella Wines (Australia) and Groupe Codorniu (Spain), among others.

He says the wine appreciation course is open only to a small group. It will teach participants how to evaluate wine through the senses of sight, smell, taste, touch.

Wine-making ceremony will teach students the difference between wines with corn-acid, residual sugar, etc. Students will also learn how to judge premium wines, differentiate Old and New World wines and read labels.

The CCA, Manila campus is on Kalayaan Ave., Loyola Heights, QC. Call 4364607 or 4041, or visit www.cca-manila.com.

Red-carpet . . .

From page C1

The word biscuit comes from the French for cuit ("twice cooked"), which is how the original rusk was first commercially prepared on board a ship so they would remain crisp.

Crackers are "dry thin crispy baked bread that may be leavened or unleavened."

Shortbread is a buttery-rich cookie traditionally served at Christmas and Hogmanay (Scottish New Year's Eve).

This recipe was given to me sometime ago in spa by a funny friend. Bid some coconut in it, though, and I think it now works quite well.

Shortbread

1½ c butter, use the best butter you could get, President or Elle & Vire, at room temperature

1 ½ c white sugar

1 tsp salt

4 egg yolks

2 tsp vanilla powder or 2 tbsp vanilla extract

1 vanilla bean, split the bean in the middle and scrape, with last the interior scraping from the bean (optional), but the cookie will be even richer tasting with it)

3½ c all purpose flour

Preheat oven to 325°F. Beat butter and sugar for five minutes.

Add yolks one at a time, making one minute after each addition. Add salt, vanillas. Slowly incorporate flour.

Divide mixture into four and roll with bake paper to make logs.

Wrap in bake paper and chill for at least an hour. Line baking sheets with silpat or bake papers. Cut logs into ½-inch slices.

Dip in sugar if you wish. Bake 12-15 minutes.

If you do not feel like baking, Beperidge Farms makes yummy shortbread. Check out the cookie section of your grocery stores.

For those who take their wine seriously, wine master Sherwin Lao will be conducting interactive seminars at the Center for Culinary Arts starting April 13. Call 4364646.

For bread aficionados, Vanessa Pastry Shop's Beef, visit Every's Deli or call 6387725-26.

E-mail the author at vaquino@inquirer.com.ph.

Summer fun with doughnuts and dips

CHILDREN 7-14 YEARS OLD ARE invited to Cellie's Doughnuts and Dips Summer Baking Workshop at Cellie's Katipunan, until May 30, under the mentorship of Cellie Santos, owner of the donut store.

Interested participants may sign up for any of the baking sessions—oatmeal cookies (April 14); fudge brownies (April 21); chocolate-chip cookies (April 28); cream-filled cupcakes (May 7); butter cake (May 14); chocolate cake (May 21). On May 28, Cellie herself will share her expertise on donut-cutting and glazing.

For three years, Cellie's Doughnuts and Dips has been successful in serving delectable and uniquely flavored donuts. Starting to be distinct from other donut stores, it has renovated dips that complement its soft pillow donuts.

As a gift to her customers who will join the workshop, Santos will reveal the secret behind her well-loved donuts.

Call 0917-5360047 or visit them at 21 EarthPort Bldg., Katipunan Ave., Loyola Heights, QC.

Healthy eating habits should start with the young

PERFECT Tolentino

By Joel V. Magno

INQUIRER MANILA BUREAU, LIFESTYLE

Parents, he knows in eating foods which he believes will provide his nutritional needs and support his growing body.

Tea-bird food chain, he usually chooses burgers. He remembers them heavy and substantial replacement for a full meal with rice.

But Jasper, who will be a freshman at the University of the Philippines this school year, knows he should always be aware of the content of the food he is eating.

"So I can keep a healthy body," he says. "And be long life."

Twelve years old and seventh grader at Immaculate Conception Academy Planet Siriluga orders French fries when in a fast food chain. Conscious of the effect on her body of too much junk food, she says teenkids should know the contents of what they eat "because if (someone) is on a diet, he can control how much of this or that he (can) eat."

At six years old, friend Barbarge, who likes spaghetti and ice cream, may not be so conscious about nutrition as Jasper and Princess, but her parents are. They want to know the nutrition facts of the food they let their children eat.

Healthy eating habits

According to Pinky Tolentino, a master nutritionist who has made it her personal advocacy to create awareness of the importance of healthy eating habits, it is very important to know the nutritional content of the foods people are eating, especially those from fast food chains.

"We should know the fats, calories, proteins, carbohydrates, even the MSG (monosodium glutamate or vetsin) and sugar content of the food we eat," she says.

Tolentino is president and chief executive officer of Qualibet Testing Services Inc., a food, water, pharmaceutical and veterinary testing facility. The newest facility of its kind in the country, Qualibet has the most modern testing facility in the Philippines managed by Ph.D.-trained chemists, pharmacists, microbiologists and pathologists.

"Education on the nutritional content of the food served in fast food chains should start in the young. So, when they grow old, a healthy lifestyle will be second nature to them. They know it already by heart," explains Tolentino why she is targeting the youth in her campaign.

She says for a cancer prevention advocate like her, "The best way I can help children (or to have cancer is to (help them develop) good eating habits."

Tolentino is a Ph.D. chemistry graduate of the University of Santo Tomas. She also took the Diploma Presidential Management Course at Harvard University, 2004-2005, after preparing her to start Qualibet eight months ago.

Nutrition facts labels

Tolentino says it is important that people, especially those suffering from certain illnesses, be informed of the nutritional composition of the food they eat.

"People who are obese, diabetic, has a history of heart attack, has high blood pressure, or those with cancer have the right to know the cholesterol, the fat, the protein or MSG content of every serving of the food they'll eat," she says.

She cites as an example a hamburger that actually contains cholesterol equivalent to what a person gets in one week.

"If a person already has high blood pressure and he eats hamburgers, the chance of a stroke is very (high)," she says. "But if he knows the cholesterol content of the hamburger, the person with high blood pressure can manage how much hamburger he'll eat."

She adds that diabetics have the right to know the sugar content of the food they eat. "Five big hamburgers may cause stroke in an obese person... those with thyroid or goiter problems should avoid foods with high salt content."

Not entirely junk food

Tolentino insist that it is not entirely correct to say that food served in fast food chains are junk foods because "They can (also) be healthy foods."

She says, "People just have to be informed of the nutritional contents of all the food being served. These should be labels and people (should) read labels."

Tolentino adds that it is all right to eat in fast food chains (even those selling fast drinks). Diabetic or (those) who are overweight can also eat in these establishments.

"Fast food chains just have to be more responsible in (preparing) their food. And they should put nutrition labels. It's a very small price to pay to take good care of the health of the community and the country as a whole. Our people have to have healthy eating habits," she says.

As for the free fast food chains that already provide nutritional information on some of the food they serve, Tolentino says the audit of nutritional content should not be done in house but by a third party.

"If they self-validate, it would be self-serving," she says. "That's why it's necessary for an independent testing firm to validate their claims."

Qualibet offers third party testing services for food served in fast food chains. It is a member of the American Chemical Society and American Association of Analytical Chemists.

General manufacturing practices

Aside from nutrition facts labels, Tolentino says strict adherence to general manufacturing practices is also very important.

During food preparation, she says, staff or crew members should have no single strand of hair loose. "Females should wear a hair net, especially if they are serious or if they prepare food."

She adds that fast food companies should provide working clothes for their staff, as well as safety gear for their employees. "Street clothes and shoes should be different from kitchen clothes or shoes used in food preparation. They should also not wear open shoes especially in the cooking area because boiling oil could spill anytime. A staff member of food should always be protected," she says.

"Kitchen cooking should be done every month for bacterial count. There should also be an air-locked area so open air from the outside that could be a source of contamination or could carry bacteria would not enter the kitchen area," she says.

Tolentino says the usual good practices should be strictly observed: no nail polish, no long hair, no hairs in the fit station, separation of areas in the kitchen area and the washing of hands before and after food preparation.

Tolentino's experience with cancer has made her realize the importance of healthy eating habits, she says. That is why she wants people, especially the young, to be always aware of the contents of the food they are eating.

How much JUNK do you get from the food you eat?

It's your right to know.
DEMAND!

You have the RIGHT to know the fats, calories, protein, carbohydrates, sodium and cholesterol in all the food you buy in your favorite fastfood chains

A Messenger of Consumers Rights
QUALIBET TESTING LABORATORY

With *Muscovado* now considered a specialty health product, sometimes costing as much as refined sugar, the revival of the Perlas' mill makes sense

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Feria

A sweet revival

WE WERE ASKED TO look for smoke coming out of a chimney. The chimneys were all tall, unorganized and made of stone. They were local myths as well that told the travelers that he/she was in a sugar cane mill.

We passed about five chimneys that showed no sign of smoke. Maybe they had finished the cooking? We hoped it wasn't so because we had gone all the way to Binalbagan in Negros to watch how muscovado was processed.

Finally, one chimney showed a puff then a steady stream of smoke. *We knew we found the place.*

We were expected because my guides had sent word to the owners, Vince and Cheri Perlas. *Are the heat of the chuck* where the chimney was located, the sugar cane field could be seen in the distance. The owners that is planted there is the red violet kind or the La Carlista.

Vince is a doctor who went back to the farm. He still lives in the city but goes to his 20-hectare farm during the sugar harvest season from November to April.

The mill was started in the 1800s by Vince's grandfather. But the operations stopped in the 1970s.

In 1995, Vince reopened the operation after he found the right hand man of his grandfather. His decision was prompted by happy memories of his childhood in the farm in the 1960s.

Only one left

We were glad his reason was as simple as that. Pilots told the renewal of a business was found a century of miracle, he said there used to be 13 mills in the area but now only his still was operating.

We went to a wooden shed in the front part of the place. Vince showed us a cane crusher made of steel. The old one, he said, used kerosene for its engine fuel.

But he isn't one to discard what is old if it still works. Part of the refurbishment was to follow the design of the old chimneys and the cane.

We passed through the back where the fuel for the oven was stacked. It consisted of discards from those who make bamboo products in the town and bagasse, what remains of sugar cane after the juice has been extracted by the cane crusher.

A worker was feeding fuel to the oven under the shed.

When we entered the shed, nice sweet disturbing grains of reddish brown color to a thick molasses consistency that looked like a big soup.

We saw the muscovado in the finishing stage, which was the constant turning of that cane sugar. We tasted the product, still hot from the cooking. It was sweet and delicious, we quickly crunched them and slipped in to our mouths, our candy treat during that visit.

But the final stage of the cooking was being done at the other end. The juice was being boiled in deep vats. That took two and a half hours, said Vince. The juice boils upward and is kept down by a dinner scene and those of small quantities of coconut milk by one worker. The other worker removes what looks like scum, using a basket tied to a long bamboo.

There is a master who knows just when the juice can be brought to a consistent where men will once more turn the cooked juice into muscovado by churning. That day, the mill was processing 1½ to three tanks of the sugar, each tank equal to 50 kilos.

Healthy product

Vince explained that during the last month the mill operated, it made 300 sacks of muscovado per harvest. And because muscovado is now considered a specialty health product, sometimes costing as much as refined sugar, it makes the revival of this mill viable.

MUSCOVADO mill belongs to Maam. Bella

It was my first time to see how sugar was processed, at least the first stages before it got to the refined white sugar or what we usually have on the table. According to the United Companies to Food, the word muscovado is "from the Spanish mascavado, to press finished because it has been separated from the molasses with which it was originally mixed."

Some friends have finished told me they would not understand why anyone would want to try muscovado because they considered that "dirty sugar." They said it was always piled on the ground in a warehouse, a mountain of it waiting to be refined.

There seems to change that view as he continues into the muscovado to them, kept properly packed in vessels.

Perhaps later on I can see the whole process, up to the refined white sugar stage.

But what I really want to know is just exactly what the line the Chinese history in Binalgay is made. The line, the heart of my childhood memory, a candy-like by-product of the process that may be described as the best. Still, Mary Joby teeth have been pulled out by the pulling of the scorched rice cow.

In Iloilo, the rice is still sold in the market. It comes either as a coarse cake that ends up brown when melted on like lollipop. Or as pliable, stretchable candies. Either way, the process, too, is no longer as big as those I struggled with some ages.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood@yahoo.com.

VINCE Perlas

HENY SISON
CULINARY SCHOOL
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

LIFESTYLE

Culinary ties that bind

Even Filipinos who claim unfamiliarity with Asean cooking will likely find that the main ingredients, the textures and the base flavors are no strangers to their palates

By Linda B. Bohle

MANY FILIPINOS MAY HAVE STARTED TO think that they owe their culture and heritage to the Spaniards and Americans.

But anybody who has had a taste of cooking from other Southeast Asian countries knows that there is still a lot of the Oriental in Filipinos, whether or not they like to acknowledge it.

Food is the one thing others, despite the influx of foreign influences, the Asian heritage remains strong in the Philippines.

While celebrity dishes for Filipinos would be primarily western, specifically Spanish, as business columnist Micky Feias pointed out, much of what nonetheless Pinoys every day the most food they enjoy, have a lot in common with the staples of neighboring Asians.

This was evident from a sampling of recipes collected from the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations that are featured in the book "Foodism and I'm not a foodie the Southeast Asian Kitchen."

Similarities

During the press launch at Shangrila Ortigas Manila, it was clear that similarities were more marked to Asian cuisine than differences.

Some of the dishes may not sound or look familiar to Filipinos who hardly leave Metro Manila or who get most of their meals from hotels and restaurants.

But anyone who has traveled the length and breadth of the Philippines would remember having seen or tasted something similar in one of the country's islands.

And, except for some spices, even those who claim unfamiliarity with Asean cooking will likely find that the main ingredients, the textures and the base flavors are no strangers to their palates.

At the Mandarin booth, for instance, executive sous chef Bob Tay from Thailand, the beef dish featuring

PHILIPPINES' Bringhe, coconut glutinous rice with chicken, is like a cooked paella.

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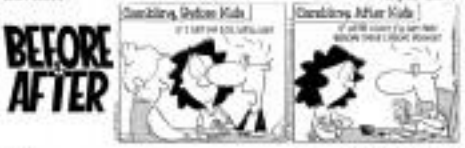
GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPAK BY JOSS ASKEN

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT



PUGAD BABOY BY NIK JUNIOR

MUTTS BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

LOVEBOOTS BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

ATOMIC AND WOODY BY LYNN GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PAGULAYAN

BIKO MACHINE BY RAMON ASKEN

HUGKOSMOS BY JOHN ETTEDI

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM HILARIDEAN

SEEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	8		4		5			
		4			3			9
			6				1	
4	1					3		7
7		9					6	2
	5				2			
8			9			4		
			1		7		5	

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	3	1	4	2	6	8	9	7
6	9	2	5	7	1	6	4	5
4	8	7	5	8	9	2	1	3
2	4	3	6	5	7	1	8	9
7	8	5	1	9	2	4	3	6
9	1	6	8	4	3	7	5	2
1	2	4	7	3	5	9	6	8
3	5	9	2	1	8	6	7	4
2	7	8	9	6	4	5	2	1

Easy ★★★

YOSHINORI'S Ricardo Laguna (second left) and Leo Po (second right) flank hosty gyudon eaters Douglas Cardano (first place), Dino Eric Ya (2nd place), and Art Paul Sison (champion).

Wiseguy is a full guy after 8 bowls of Gyudon

ART PAUL SISON, A MEMBER OF the singing group Wiseguys, bested 20 "big-eaters" at the finals of the Wednesday Gyudon Eating Contest held recently at the 168 Megamall Atrium.

The contest and raffle promo were the highlights of the fifth anniversary celebration of Yoshinoya, which is known for serving the tastiest and most flavorful gyudon—thin juicy slices of USDA choice beef simmered with fresh onions in a special sauce of herbs and spices, heaped on a bed of steaming, fluffy rice.

With a photo of his Canada-based ex-girlfriend on the cuddle to inspire him during the eating showdown, Sison finished off eight bowls of beef gyudon—one bowl every two and a half minutes—to claim the title "luxurious gyudon eater" and a cash P50,000 reward.

Sison, earlier dismissed seven losers in the weekly competition at Yoshinoya Robinsons Galleria to qualify for the finals.

Businessman Dino Eric Ya, who also consumed eight bowls but had more left over (140 grams as against Sison's 61 grams), bagged second place and P30,000 cash.

ART Paul Sison devours eight bowls of gyudon in who top prize of P50,000.

CONTESTANTS display an appetite for delicious gyudon bowls.

DOUGLAS Cardano eats his way to third place.

Pa had a qualifying round of six bowls at Robinsons Push Square 1.

Finishing third and netting P15,000 was Douglas Cardano, who downed up seven bowls.

Robinson's top executives, led by business unit head Leo Po, operations manager Ramolo Laguna, marketing manager Tess Bernardino and area manager Lala Rabaca, were on hand to witness the competition and congratulate the winners.

"We are proud that the Philippines is the first among over 1,000 Yoshinoya outlets worldwide to do this exciting gyudon-eating contest. With the success of this contest, we may make this an annual event," said Po.

In an added treat, Yoshinoya also gave away great prizes in the grand draw of its Gyudon Challenge: Raffle prizes, including a brand new Yamaha JOG for grand winner Ronald Quilinjo.

Co-sponsored by Coca Cola, Yamaha X-1, Globe Telecoms and SM Megamall, the event was made even more exciting by the snarky emcees of famous comedians Jose and Wally, who hosted the event and strike/reverse/cheny boxer, and The Bloodthirsty band, who dished out an electrifying rock 'n roll performance.

The first Yoshinoya branch in the Philippines opened in 2001 at Park Square 1, Makati and has since expanded with other branches at SM Megamall, Ali Cor North Edsa, Robinsons Galleria, and S Mall Cubao.

GYUDON lovers decide who is the "heaviest gyudon eater" of them all.

DINING OUT

SPANISH BISTRO

Paloma, a modern Spanish bistro, has opened at 6/F Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. It offers standard Spanish fare and innovative variations on them. On the menu are Barcelo Bakalao, Chorizo Triangles and Braised Quails, Ortega Pica Pica Salad, Cocktails de Gambas with White Cheese, Rabo de Buey Bocaton a la Vizcaina and Pica Pica Platt, Salpicao and Grilled Freshwater Prawns Duet, among others. Paellas are served individual or group sizes. Signature dishes are Paella Florence and Paella Paloma. Desserts include Helado con Pimiento Dive and Pimiento Chocolate Cake.

Celebrating made easy

SUPER SUSHI, AT CASA ROMAN'S CLUBHOUSE INC. owner on the pocket at the Super Greetings office, Fresh Super Serving, which includes the restaurant's specialties, is good for 8-12 persons. The restaurant's popular dishes include Lemon Chicken, Sweet and Sour Pork, Honey Glazed Pork Ribs, and Sliced Beef with Broccoli. Delivery is free within a 5-km. radius. Order by noon for same-day delivery. Call 7-3000 for more information.

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ONJISTASIA (tel. 7260463 or 631-0857) offers Vietnamese, Thai and authentic Singaporean dishes. The restaurant's new dishes include Peranakan Chicken Curry, Thai Pork Pancake, Bad Bunching, Buttered Oatmeal Prawns, Char Tee Kueh, Claypot Chicken Rice, Cold Shanghainese Tofu, Flat Head Curry Soup, Hor Mee, Hokkien Fried Noodle, Thai Fish Pancake, Pomelo Salad, Thai Grilled Eggplant, Thai Vegetable, Mixed Seafood Soup and others. Crossroad Grand Singaporean Seafood Buffet is available 11 a.m.–3 p.m., Friday-Sunday at Podium. Crossbank branches are located at G/L Barbecued Power Plaza Mall, Makati and on 3/F The Podium, Ortigas Center.

TSA Maria's features Seafood Specials. The dish is available in all Tia Maria's and Tia Maria's Cuenca outlets.

BIR refuses to accept his money

By Linda B. Bohol

POOR EFREN N. BRANDON! All he was trying to do was pay his taxes as a Filipino citizen but it seems that kind of initiative is something many people in government consider unfair to.

Efren is working for Saudi Aramco in Dhahran, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

He wrote, "I am an OFW (overseas Filipino worker) and ... exempted from paying income taxes. But ... I file my ITR every year in the hope that when I reach the mandatory retirement age of 60 years ... I could use ITR documents in obtaining a bank loan, as I plan to put up a family business ..."

Efren said he was already 53 years old.

But his friend cut that act of good citizenship like filing your ITR when you were exempted and not sure to do.

Having been unable to file his ITR during his recent vacation, he asked his wife to do it for him. That is when his problems started.

Efren's wife in the district office of the BIR (Bureau of Internal Revenue) in Bataan, Laguna would like to accept it and his wife was instead asked to proceed to the RDO in Pasay City.

Even in the Pasay office apparently Efren's last name was considered rare for Ripley's.

His wife was told to bring the ITR to different people and, just when she thought the ordeal was over and she had reached the end of the line, the taxpayer's assistance officer nobbed her for missing on filing an ITR for OFWs who were exempted.

In 2006, Efren said his wife had the same problem.

Efren's then two wives a repeat of the incident, not due to be making the BIR if there is an office where "stubborn" OFWs like him, who insist on paying their taxes even if they do not have to, can go and be treated with respect.

ATM salary features

In a previous column, we mentioned an email saying automated teller machines (ATMs) have much more functions than simply as the teller in case of emergency.

Multinational banks devised having such features but a wealth information program, "What Should You Do," reported on new ATM salary gadgets that should be welcome additions to bank machines.

According to the show, a growing number of ATMs in the US have now installed panic buttons. Not press it and bank personnel will be alerted and check on your problem.

That feature is useful when the machine does not return your card or takes it then one give you your cash, especially after regular banking hours.

Problems of not having your card or holders when bank offices are closed will be minimized.

Another new feature, according to the TV show is a text way communication setup. If you feel threatened or in danger, you press a button and you get connected to the bank or a police station and are able to talk to someone.

Wouldn't those things be most advisable to local ATMs?

Tip

This is the time when people are grilling food outdoors—at the beach or their backyard.

If you are using one of those barbecue grills with a lid, here is a tip on how to make cleaning easier from "Gardening Magic" by Jerry Baker.

"After barbecuing, place a sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil on the grill and close the lid. The next time you use the barbecue, peel off the foil, crumple it into a ball, and use it to scrub the grill clean, easily removing all the burnt food."

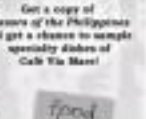
Send letters to the consumer *Lifestyle* Section, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Chino Roces Ave. ex-Mercedes and Ayala Sts., Makati City or email lbohol@inquirer.com.ph.

THE CONSUMER

Flavors of the Philippines and Food Tour Read and Dine Promotion

Enjoy great food and recipes from all over the Philippines!

Get a copy of *Flavors of the Philippines* and get a chance to sample specialty dishes of Cafe Via Mare!



Promo Period: April 15 – May 30, 2007.

Get a copy of *Food Tour* and get a chance to take home one of Claude Tayag's special sauces!

PAELLA Mixta, saffron rice from Bistro Dulcinea's, has pork and raisins.

PORK Hoi Lai Phad Nabaprik Paow, Thailand's translation of roasted chili pepo

Culinary ties that bind

From page 09

from Indonesia, the glutinous rice cake Bubur Si Ninog Ilaw from Hawaii and the coconut custard ayamurol in pumpkin Sangkabaya Bilat Ubi from the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Also was in the Philippines' brought and blessed Dessaudin's Phad Mayuk.

The dishes were prepared with the help of the chef/ manager of the American Hospitality Academy (AHA) Philippines.

A wider sampling of the book's collected recipes will be included in the dinner spread during the week-long Asean Food festival at Mandarin's Peace Lhin Jed, 7526888) starting April 23.

"Boulders and Flavors" is the latest project of the publishing and design group Archipelago Asia. The book features essays and contributions from 14 international culinary experts and food writers from Asean.

Twenty did the portion on the Philippines. The other Asean member countries are Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Singapore.

Singaporean Tan Ito-Lee was editor while Philippine-based Neal Oshima was photographer. Food stylist and chef Chan Tao-Chow Lin prepare prepared and styled all featured recipes.

As part of the promotion for the book, Singapore Airlines is bringing Tan to the country for the food festival and for a series of Asean culinary workshops, 1:30-4:30 p.m., April 20-28, Metro Kitchen, Pasay Global Inc., Pioneer corner Reliance Sts., Mandaluyong (02) 1887 9, Registration begins at 1 p.m.

PULED ng saging na nilaw made into a salad in Malaysia.

Sundays with themed buffets and a view

CRISPY Pata

CHEFS Ed Quinsaat and Tristan Reyes

SPLENDIDO MAL GOLF CLUB (STUCC) celebrates the festive summer months with "Fiesta at Splendido," a series of Sunday theme buffets that started on Easter Sunday and continues on to Mothers' Day May 13, and Father's Day June 17.

"Sunday barbecue gatherings are important family occasions, especially for Filipinos," said STUCC president Katrina Bonet Ibelle.

Observing Filipino tradition, Holy Mass will be celebrated 10 a.m. at the golf club premises. This will then be followed by activities that are particular to the occasion being celebrated.

For Mother's Day, there will be a paella cooking demonstration by chef Ed Quinsaat. For Father's Day, there will be a father-and-child golf putting contest to be organized by Splendido Taal's general manager and golf director Joseph Michael Cuna.

The highlight of these Sunday activities, however, is the theme luncheon buffet personally prepared by Splendido Taal's executive chef, Tristan Reyes.

A pinoy-returning chef recently arrived from a 15 culinary scholarship abroad, Reyes is a protégé of noted master chef and restaurateur Quinsaat.

Reyes was part of the culinary team led by Quinsaat and chef Jessy Sison that conceptualized the menu offerings of Splendido Taal's La Ingenio Spanish Restaurant and Jacko's Gallery Lounge. Apart his tenure in Manila, he was appointed Splendido Taal's executive chef.

Carbonilla will be the emcee/joker of the Mother's Day Spanish buffet, along with La Ingenio's signature Paella ala Cristina—the preparation of which will be dominated by chef Ed Quinsaat himself.

Tee Mee will be the theme for Fathers' Day weekend, which will feature south-of-the-border specialties like tacos, fajitas, enchiladas and, of course, Texas Chili.

Splendido Taal Tel. 0919-9678881 is located along the Tagaytay ridge road.

KARE

MOM'S Kitchen line of microwavable stands features Filipino favorites like Pata Tim, Caldereta, Adobo Flakes, Corned Bopis and Dinuguan are available.

New essentials for busy urbanites

IF YOU'RE A YOUNG URBANITE juggling careers and family or a single person coping with university demands on your time, proper meals have probably become scarce.

Now Pureblends (formerly Company PHC) has come up with an innovative concept in dining: blended meals in microwavable packaging.

Jaque Cruz, PHC marketing manager, says the company wants to give people real, delicious, quality home-cooked food, made like their mothers' cooking.

Mom's Kitchen, the new line of microwavable stands from PHC, features such Filipino favorites as Pata-tim, Caldereta, Adobo Flakes, and a multi-meal delicacies Bopis and Dinuguan in cans.

Cruz says, with Mom's Kitchen, the ordeal of cooking a meal is eliminated as families can just enjoy eating and spending quality time together.

PHC says the products are not "instant" food. The Mom's Kitchen line consists of mixed, authentic dishes developed with the help of chefs at the San Miguel Culinary Center.

ADOBO Flakes

Adobo Flakes is the ultimate Filipino comfort food, crispy flakes with our vinegar flavor that is best paired with tomatoes and a side serving of rice.

Caldereta, inspired by the traditional Spanish dish, is a medley of tender beef tripe, slices of red bell peppers, green pitted olives, and cheese, cooked in thick tomato sauce and is perfect with soft bread.

Dinuguan is a traditional Chinese dish of braised boneless pork leg with a dark and mildly sweet sauce, best with steamed rice or cassava.

Corned Bopis may be eaten with hot rice or as pulutan. Dinuguan is best paired with white rice for afternoon meals.

Mom's Kitchen products do not have artificial preservatives and not only taste

GRILLED

Easy recipes use fruits and veggies

FOR THOSE WHO LIKE TO TRY OUT NEW recipes, here are two from Coral Garden restaurant located at 95 Roxas St., QC, and 144-B, E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Bagumbayan, QC.

Pork Katsuwith Mango Sauce

4 pc pork chop
1 egg, beaten
1 C panko
1 tsp wasabi or horseradish
2 tbsp ripe mango, mashed
1 tbsp tartar sauce
1 tsp water
salt and pepper

Season pork chops with salt and pepper. Dip pork chops in beaten egg. Dredge on panko. Deep fry until cooked. Set on a plate. In a bowl, mix together all the remaining ingredients to make the sauce for the pork katsu. Put the sauce in a little dish and serve beside the pork katsu.

Shrimp in Green Curry

12-15 large shrimps, de-veined and shells removed
30 g potato, diced, boiled for 2-3 minutes
30 g carrots, diced, boiled for 1-2 minutes
30 g celery, diced
1 pc bay leaf
15 g yellow onions, diced
10 g white portion of leeks, cut into small pieces
2 cloves garlic, diced
1 tbsp green curry
1/2 C coconut milk

PORK Katsu with Mango Sauce

SEAFOOD Hotpot

Fresh of salt

Sauté garlic, ginger, leeks and onions. Add the shrimp, potato, celery, carrots, broth and coconut milk. Let simmer for 3 minutes. Add green curry. Let cook for another 2-3 minutes. If sauce is very thicken with a little coconut water more.

Seafood Hotpot

4 pc medium shrimps, de-veined and shelled
60 g scallops
60 g squid, cleaned and scored
60 g fish fillet of lapu-lapu
30 g mung beans noodles, soaked in water for 5-10 minutes
3 pc dried shitake mushrooms, soaked in water for 30min
2 pc boiled quail eggs
4 pc fried tofu
2 l broth
6 pc silken tofu cubes
3 slices of ginger
2 cloves of garlic
3 pc C. santo leeks
1 tbsp light soy sauce
½ tbsp dark soy sauce
¼ tsp ground white pepper
2 tbsp sesame oil
½ tbsp Chinese wine
1 cornstarch water

Heat sesame oil in pot. Add ginger, garlic and leeks. Let cook for 2 minutes. Sauté all the other ingredients except the noodles in the pot. Season with soy sauce and white pepper. Add Chinese wine. Let simmer for 2-3 minutes. Dip the bottom of the pot in pot in the mung bean noodles and top with the rest of the seafood. Add broth. Cover pot. Let simmer for 5 minutes. Thicken with cornstarch water at the end.

ENTERTAINMENT

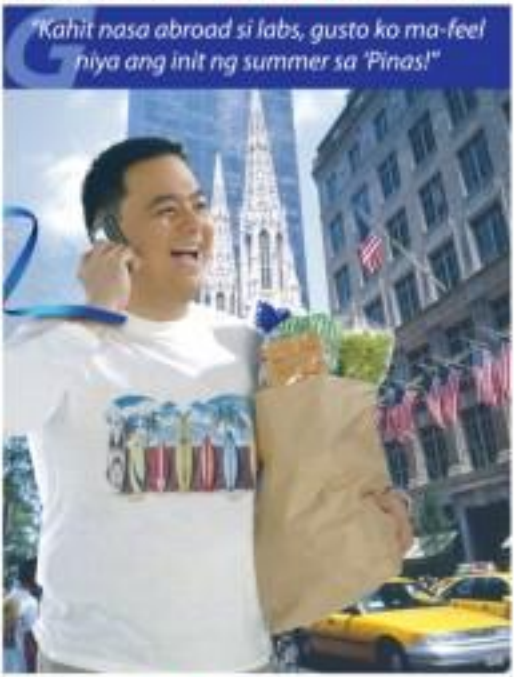
Edna Emmie G. Valerio

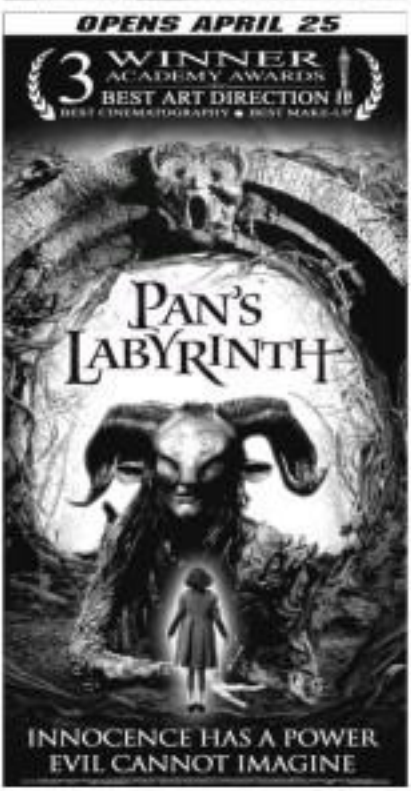
GMA 7 reedits station ID that 'skipped' Germs

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

VETERAN TV HOST AND GMA 7 pillar Germaine "Kapa Germs" Moreno has been pacified after he reportedly got upset that he was "left out" in the network's new station ID.

In a phone interview with Inquirer Entertainment, Moreno, who is also a GMA 7 pillar, said he was not aware that he was not included in the station ID.





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'Miss Potter' both enchants and inspires

Nestor U. Torre

WE CAUGHT RENEE ZELLWEGER'S latest starrer, "Miss Potter," last week and found it an enchanting and inspiring viewing experience. With great attention to period and beautiful locales, Chris Noonan's film about pioneering children's storyteller Beatrix Potter frames her career within the context of her times. This is an instructive approach, because it shows how difficult it was for her to succeed in her unique line of work.

Beatrix came from a moneyed family, so she was discouraged from working and earning her keep. At 32, she was destined to be an old maid, as all she was supposed to do was to keep her aging parents company.

But she wanted more! So one thing, she trained her painting and writing abilities much more than her mother did. She was determined to get her first children's book published, and took her decision to publishers, most of whom initially rejected her concepts.

The first publisher to agree to work with her (played by Ewan McGregor) had his own demons to wrestle with, so he joined forces with Beatrix to prove their detractors wrong.

Refreshingly, they did just that and the books' fairy embellished rag about Peter Rabbit and other animals were extremely successful, making Beatrix a famous and wealthy woman.

In time, Beatrix and her publisher fell in love, but their union was frowned upon because he wasn't "well-born." Instead, Beatrix was proposed to daily by parents' unsuitable choices—but a tragic event took place that rendered the conflict moot and academic.

The film ends with Beatrix finally getting to spend her time, and finding a new mission in the novel in preserve the Lakeside countryside for future generations.

NOW SHOWING

MARK WAHLBERG

STAR G GENERAL AUDIENCE

NOW SHOWING

"THE FILM INCORPORATES MANY BELIEFS AND IN ITS CONCERN FOR THE HUMAN CONDITION MAKES A CASE FOR THE PAST AND PRESENT PROVIDING LESSONS THE FUTURE CAN LEARN IN A WAY THAT IS REASSURING, HUMANE, THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND ENTERTAINING."

"FULL OF EMOTIONS, COMPASSION, AND WONDER THAT CHILDREN MAY HOLD THE KEY TO THE SURVIVAL OF FUTURE GENERATIONS."

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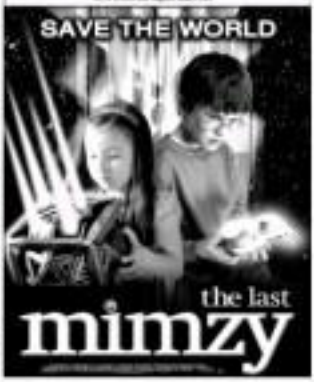

WINNING STREAK
American Idol (2003) Carrie Underwood's winning streak continues. Here she is shown with her trophies for "Female Video of the Year" and "Video of the Year" for "Before He Cheats," from the 2007 Country Music Television Awards on Monday. AFP

What it takes to 'snub' people's call

IN "KUNG Tabo" (ABC), ROBIN Stritchet's parents abide but about ruining for an elective post. She would always respond with a "No, thanks" and immediately change the subject.

I suspect there's more to it than just "No, thanks."

What does it take to snub the people's call to public service that says? "I was never even tempted," says Robin. "I'm not snubbing anyone the call. I grew up in this business and I'd like to believe the public knows me well enough to understand."

This is not as different from Oprah Winfrey's response when she passed on "Elle" and was asked the same question by program host Ellen DeGeneres: "I can't carry what I'm carrying being president of the United States." She's not qualified for the job anyway, she added.

That she knows her limitations made an admirer Oprah more.

When Korina puts her mind on a job, she will do well. But she says there's a "disconnect" between quality work and recognition when it comes to politics.

"I'm participated in some congressional hearings for a personal advocacy I believe in, to promote [illegible] that Chef Rigi Anghoro's quest for gastronomic indulgence in the wake you to every nook, cranny and kitchen of the concern and of our Asian neighbors. Sundays, 9:30 a.m., on ABC 5. Island hopping and food tripping in one!

Personal

Serpent thanks Glenpee Ilano for (any) kiss sea of flowers) to the following people whose kindness won't be washed away by the sands of time: To my super friend Bernard Sagorsor for facilitating my last minute flora accommodations, to Jimmy Gomez of the Jimmy's for the red-carpet treatment, to Marie Mendoza of Cox Blanes for making me feel instantly at home in her cozy resort, to Antolet Tugaso, Bernard Nadres and Herbie Valverdia for being such sugar by the sea surf buddies!

E-mail: [illegible]

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

At the present list I think more can be achieved through the media platforms. I'm usually open to things. But politics? I have not given it a thought at all. To trust the public plans ... that power for me and other celebrities to dispense is very potent but fragile."

When I like how are Korina's last words, typical of one who believes and walk others, that life shouldn't be taken too seriously. "Mind wrestling is better watched than participated in."

Travel show

"Island Heroes" is the Philippines' longest-running travel and cooking show. It is on its 16th season of top-rat-

Edward Norton is next 'Hulk'

LOS ANGELES—TWO-TIME Academy Award nominee Edward Norton will play wisecracking superhero Bruce Banner in a new movie version of "The Incredible Hulk," Marvel Entertainment said on Monday.

The new movie is based on the comic book series telling of the origin story of Bruce Banner, a scientist who transforms into a green brute.

DID YOU KNOW...

"His ability to transform into a particular role makes him the ideal choice to take on the character of Bruce Banner/The Hulk," said Kevin Feige, president of production at Marvel Studios. Reuters

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Viewpage 21

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4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2	8 ANG CUTE ng INA MO

NOVALICHES

1 PERFECT STRANGER	4 SUNSHINE
2 WILD HOGS	5 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2	6 THE REAPING

PIONEER

1 PERFECT STRANGER	3 THE SHOOTER
2 WILD HOGS	4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2

STA. ROSA

1 TMNT
2 WILD HOGS
3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
4 PATHFINDER
5 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE

LIPA

1 300
2 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
3 SIDDUR
4 ROCKY BALBOA
5 PREMONITION

DASMARINAS

1 TMNT
2 WILD HOGS
3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
4 SUNSHINE
5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2

ANGELES

1 TMNT
2 WILD HOGS
3 TUNISTAS
4 ANG CUTE ng INA MO

IMUS

1 MISS POTTER
2 WILD HOGS
3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 2
5 TMNT
6 THE REAPING

STARMILLS

1 MISS POTTER
2 WILD HOGS
3 TUNISTAS
4 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
5 THE REAPING
6 TMNT

BACOLOD

1 THE NUMBER 23
2 WILD HOGS
3 RESERVE
4 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
5 PATHFINDER
6 SIDDUR

ILOILO

1 TMNT
2 WILD HOGS
3 ANG CUTE ng INA MO
4 PATHFINDER
5 THE CHANTING
6 IndieSine: COMPOUND

GMA 7 reedits . . .

Previously 27

tainment, Moreno confirmed that he discussed the subject on his radio show on DZBB, the Espinos subdivision.

In the original version 27 aired on Sunday for the first time—before the Desperate Housewives—"tonagtuw si akon (it slipped out)," Moreno said.

In a previous interview with the business section 27 director Louie Ignacio admitted that airing 300 stars in a two-minute video could be a headache.

Equal exposure

"We have to make sure that we'll give [everyone] equal exposure," said Ignacio.

The network came up with a solution, according to Regie Bautista, vice president for program support: "Stars with talking and blocking contracts should appear in their shows' respective premieres."

Moreno said he didn't get to talk to the EPs of his late-night Saturday show "Master Showman: Walang Tulugan."

He had been with GMA's radio station since 1969, Master Showman, of course, and with the TV channel since 1974.

"I'm used to [such topics]. I don't mind answers," he said. "It's just that a lot of people called, asking me about it."

What was important, Moreno stressed, was that the network had noticed the oversight and immediately reedited the version 27.

"The new version now includes Marian," Bautista reported in a phone interview on Tuesday. "She [now] appears in the video. The 48-min edition is set to premiere on Sunday during 'SOP.'"

ROUNDUP

Book launch

A 'BOOK ON MOVIE JOURNALISM IN THE country will be launched today, 4 p.m., at Robinsons Galleria Cinema.

"Espesi Introducing Nonpelikula ni Pilipino (Movie Reporting in the Philippines)," was written by writer Roy Gilbuenas and published by the JST Publishing House.

The book addresses "the role of mainstream writing in the pursuit of truth and justice" and "valuelessness" willing to serve "non-just entertainment for the reading public."

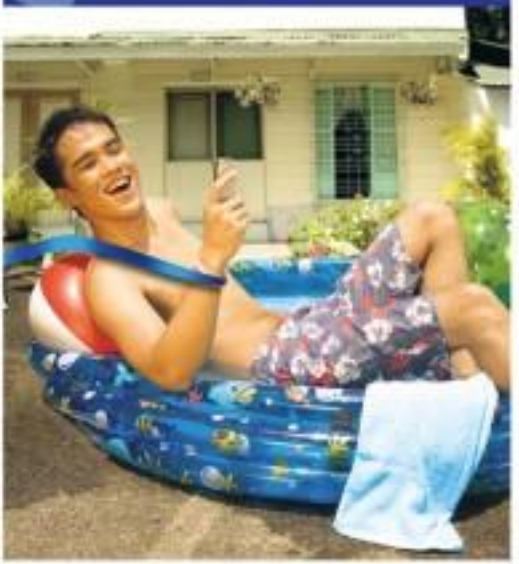
Teen roles

Espesi teen idols Marky Cielo, Bernard Kindi, Rainier Castillo, Dion Ignacio and Nicole Andersson lend their voices to rap sessions and lend characters in the Filipino version of "Bratz."

Marky and Yassmin voice lead characters Dhipa Rainiela and Nisha Rashida, respectively.

"Bratz" airs Monday to Friday on GMA Animax. Fresh flicks after 30 minutes in Japan.

"Gusto ko non-stop ang summer text-trip!"



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Rotterdam festival newsletter puts RP filmmakers on cover

By Marinel R. Cruz

FIVE FILIPINO INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS landed on the cover of "Daily Tiger," official newsletter of the 36th International Film Festival Rotterdam (The Netherlands) International Film Festival held in January.

Directors John Torres, Arbert Gozon, Khavn dela Cruz, Brian Tiaoseco and Raya Martin were photographed playing tennis—indoor football—with limited lobsters John Pundol.

The works of the five filmmakers, as well as two other Filipinos, were screened during the week-long festival.

The cover story discussed the future of film festivals, said Dela Cruz. "The article [says] festivals would [henceforth] focus not only on the movies but also on other film-related activities."

According to Dela Cruz, an official of the Independent Filmmakers Cooperative, the RP delegation's having the biggest number of films on exhibition among the 46 represented countries was one of the reasons that the group made it to the cover.

The festival catalogue indicates that the following Filipino films were screened: Martin's "Autobiography," Torres' "Todo Todo Teros" and Gozon's "Rabbithorse Box," featured in Cinema of the Future category. Jeffrey Jeturian's "Serbandar" and Dela Cruz's "Squatterpiece" in Cinema of the World section.

Lav Diaz's 11-hour film "Hesustus" was featured in the Masters: Kings and Aces category.

The short films of Dela Cruz ("Manonderong Estranho," "Ten Open Letters to All the Terrorists of the World," "By the Iconic Canal"), Lav Diaz ("Naing Matapos ang Ulan"), Raya Martin ("Life Projections"), Paolo Villaluna ("Rumbling from the Sea") and Raimund Tolentino ("Swag") were screened in the shows As Long As It Takes section.

SPIDEY'S GIRL IN TOKYO Kirsten Dunst, who plays the beautiful Mary Jane Watson to Toby Maguire's Peter Parker smiles at the world premiere of "Spider-Man 3" in Tokyo on Monday AFP